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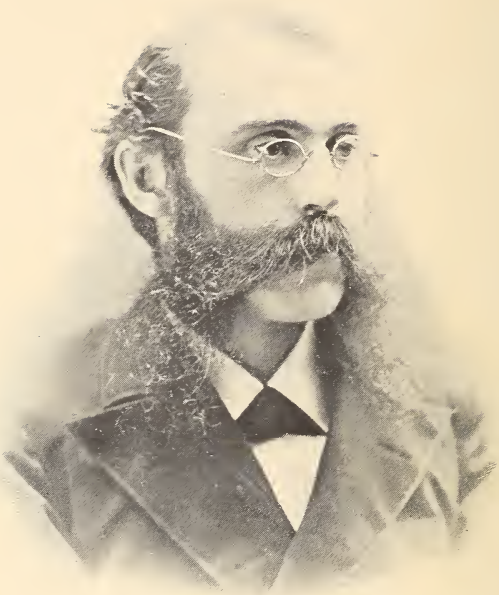

Yours sincerely
C. W. Winchester

THE

WELLS OF SALVATION,

AND OTHER SERMONS.

A Souvenir

OF SIX YEARS' LABOR IN THE PRESIDING ELDERSHIP.

BY

C. W. WINCHESTER, A. M., D. D.,
Author of "The Gospel Kodak Abroad."

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
DR. DANIEL STEELE.

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PREFACE.

CORNING District, Genesee Conference, became the author's field of labor, by appointment of Bishop E. G. Andrews, October 6, 1891. This volume is made up wholly of sermons preached on that district. With one exception, they were delivered without any thought that they would ever be put in print, and are now published almost exactly as they were spoken. The exception is "*The Tenth for God.*" That was printed in tract form before it was delivered at all; it was preached to thirty-four different congregations; three thousand copies were distributed gratuitously throughout the district; Bishop C. C. McCabe (then Missionary Secretary) sent a copy to every presiding elder in the Methodist Episcopal Church; and it was republished in *The Gospel in All Lands.* While these sermons were all preached in the course of the author's district labors, they are but a small fraction of the entire number thus delivered. But why another book of sermons; and sermons, too, by an obscure preacher? What does the literary

or religious world care for the sermons of the presiding elder of Corning District? Nothing. These sermons are not published for the benefit of the world, but for Corning District. They are published at the suggestion and request of many persons, whose judgment is worthy of the highest respect. Long reflection and earnest prayer, on the part of the author, have solidified an early impression into a deep conviction that, at the end of his term on the district, he ought to leave this souvenir of many glorious quarterly-meetings, to keep the truth alive in the hearts of the people and to confirm them "in holding fast that whereunto they have attained." He does not put these discourses into a book because he thinks their literary merit entitles them to preservation, but because he humbly believes that God has used them for the good of souls, and will continue so to use them. A large proportion of the sermons are upon what is popularly called "*The Higher Life*," because that has been the great theme on Corning District the last six years, and because it is believed that that is the truth which the people most desire and most need. If the book wanders beyond the bounds of Corning District, the author hopes and prays and *believes* that it will benefit all who condescend to give it a pe-

rusal. He begs that all readers will overlook the literary faults and weakness of the book, and think of nothing but the truth which it may contain.

Having said so much about the book, the author can not forbear leaving on record a few words about the district which is so dear to his heart, and which will always be a fragrance in his memory.

Corning District covers an area of nineteen hundred and sixty square miles, including fifty townships, two cities and sixteen incorporated villages. It embraces most of Steuben County, New York, about half of Tioga County, Pennsylvania, and small patches of Allegheny and Ontario Counties in the former State, and of Potter County in the latter. The capital and railroad center of the district is the city whose name it bears. You may take your right hand to represent Corning district. Your thumb is the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad; the forefinger is the Rochester Branch of the Erie; the middle finger is the main line of the Erie; the fourth finger is the Addison and Pennsylvania, connecting with Corning by the Erie at Addison; and the little finger is the Fall Brook, with its various branches. Without leaving the hand, you can travel forty miles on the thumb, thirty-nine on

the first finger, fifty on the middle finger, forty-six on the fourth finger, and eighty-five on the little finger. Branching out from the first finger are two extra digits, called, respectively, the Kanona and Prattsburg, and the Bath and Hammondsport Railroads, the former twelve miles long and the latter eight. The middle finger has a branch digit, called the New York and Pennsylvania Railroad, fifteen miles of whose line, from Canisteo to Rexville, are within the bounds of Corning District. The little finger has a very convenient excrescence, called the Buffalo and Susquehanna, running thirteen miles of its length through our territory. Adding together all these figures, we find that there are three hundred and eight miles of railroad within the limits of the district. Of its forty-nine pastoral charges, thirty-four have their headquarters on the iron roads; and of its one hundred and thirteen regular Sunday-preaching places, forty-eight can be reached by rail. One charge, Pulteney, is reached by a most delightful steamboat ride of ten miles on the far-famed Keuka, one of the most lovely lakes on the globe, whose sloping banks are covered with fifteen thousand acres of as fine vineyards as the sun ever looks upon between the oceans.

On the territory covered by Corning District,

Methodism is the great religious force. It has 113 congregations, 91 church edifices, 43 parsonages and (when the last returns were made) 9,064 members and probationers. All other Protestant denominations combined have in the same territroy, 116 congregations, 104 church edifices, and about ten thousand members. One township in the district—Bath—has six Methodist Episcopal Church edifices, belonging to four different pastoral charges.

The labors of the presiding elder of Corning District are very arduous. The present incumbent has traveled* 25,300 miles by rail; 220 by steamboat; and 8,740 behind horses—a total of 34,260 miles. He has preached, in his district-work, 1,278 sermons, in 111 different places, and delivered 80 lectures and addresses. One lecture, "The Eight Wonders of the World," has been delivered at 46 different places in the district, in most cases with no financial benefit to the lecturer. He has presided in 1,085 Quarterly Conferences.

In all his journeying to and fro he has not, in a single instance, used any public conveyance on the Lord's-day.

* The figures in this paragraph are strictly accurate for five years and a half; for the last half-year they are very carefully estimated.

In the six years, eighty-seven different pastors have labored on Corning District. They have not toiled in vain. The six years have witnessed the following gains: In number of charges, six; in salaries allowed the pastors, $2,400; in number of church edifices, six; in number of parsonages, four; in value of churches, $55,500; in value of parsonages, $9,200; in number of members in full connection 1,500. More than 6,000 persons have been received on probation during the six years; and 3,300 adults, and 8,000 children, have received baptism. That the Genesee Conference Minutes do not show a larger increase in full numbers in Corning District is due to several causes: (1) A thorough pruning of the Church records on most of the charges; (2) Losses by death and removal; (3) Lack of thoroughness in revival work; and (4) Failure of converts to "go on unto perfection."

For what has been accomplished, we give all the glory to God.

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INTRODUCTION.

IT is one of the favorable signs of the times that evangelical sermons in book-form find so wide circulation in our country. It betokens not only an elevation and refinement of literary taste in the laity, and an increasing interest in Christian truth, but also that the pulpit is steadily advancing in influence over cultivated minds. We hope the time will soon come when John Foster's essay "on some of the causes by which evangelical religion has been rendered unacceptable to persons of cultivated taste," will be entirely irrelevant. The ministry of the Methodist Episcopal Church should contribute to hasten the coming of this new religious era by supplying the public with religious reading of a tone so high as to dissipate the prejudice in men of taste against Christianity, arising from its association with a great number of its professors whose minds are weak and uncultivated. To the question, why this Church has not in the past supplied its proportion of this species of literature according to the number and talent of its preachers, several answers may be given. One characteristic excellence of their preaching has been the aim at immediate results. Hence their pulpit preparations for extemporaneous address, in their literary form, if

written at all, have been synoptical and fragmentary, ghastly skeletons, to be closeted rather than exposed to public view. Again, through fear of contracting the evil habit of sermon reading in the pulpit—displeasing to the audience and lessening the preacher's power—elaborate sermon writing was not much encouraged by our denominational fathers. Our peculiar ecclesiastical polity favoring the repetition of the best pulpit productions, the preacher has been inclined to withhold these from the press till he should be laid aside from the active duties of the sacred office. But in old age the sight is too dim to decipher the abbreviations of the youthful pen in its eager haste to keep pace with the rushing stream of thought. The administrator of the dead preacher's estate orders the manuscript sermons to be sold by the pound to the rag-man, or to be thrust into the furnace. Thus many of our most gifted preachers are passing away, leaving as their only literary monument a Thanksgiving or Fourth of July sermon, in the perishable form of a pamphlet, or the still more ephemeral newspaper. Dr. Winchester has very wisely become his own literary executor, by causing some of his best pulpit utterances to crystallize into the solid and enduring form of a book. Thus, with the apostle Peter, he says to the young of his generation, and to all the generations to come, "I will endeavor that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance." To the "Wells of Salvation" he in-

vites all men to come and drink. He is not afraid that he will impoverish himself by this public invitation. He is confident that he can draw more water from the same wells to carry to his thirsty hearers during his future public ministry. In this particular, I have good reason for saying that he does not misjudge himself. From an association with him during four years in a college recitation-room, in the relation of teacher and pupil, I discovered that he was not only a thorough scholar, but that he had the greatest of all intellectual gifts, styled by Dr. Bushnell "the talent of growth."

We are especially pleased with this book because of its thorough doctrinal orthodoxy, accentuating the neglected Wesleyan tenet of Christian perfection, or the deliverance of the believer from sin, actual and original, in the present life, through the agency of the Holy Spirit, secured by the mediation of the Son of God. Doctrines promotive of advanced Christian experience must be inculcated if we, as a Church, are to be characterized in the future, as we have been in the past, as eminently spiritual and aggressive. These Scriptural truths, faithfully proclaimed, constitute the only dike which can resist the tides of worldliness which are setting so strongly against the Church of Christ and threatening her submersion. We congratulate the preachers and societies of Corning District on the fact that such a dike has been around them during the term of the presiding elder, which

ends in 1897. We commend the episcopal wisdom which appoints to this subepiscopal office men of eminent spirituality, who will proclaim in every pulpit doctrines inspiring and fostering the deepest spirituality and practical godliness. The conservation of Wesleyan theology in the faith of the Church largely depends on such appointments to this office. We trust that other presiding elders, following Dr. Winchester's example, will leave behind them monuments of their faithfulness to revealed truth in volumes of sermons as "Wells of Salvation" for the refreshment of believers.

I deem it an honor to connect my name with this book in the humble office of a porter, who opens for the Christian public the gate to a fountain of pure water.

DANIEL STEELE.

CONTENTS.

I.

PAGE.

THE WELLS OF SALVATION, ... 15

II.

BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST, ... 32

III.

NAAMAN THE LEPER, ... 50

IV.

THE CRUCIFIXION, ... 67

V.

THE CLEANSING BLOOD, ... 85

VI.

THE SECOND BLESSING, ... 103

VII.

THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY GHOST, ... 125

VIII.

RECEIVING THE HOLY GHOST, ... 147

IX.

THE FULLNESS OF THE SPIRIT, ... 165

X.

FULL SALVATION, ... 185

XI.

PAGE.

SEVEN GREAT WORDS, ... 202

XII.

CHRISTIAN PERFECTION, ... 219

XIII.

ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION, ... 238

XIV.

DAVID'S DOUBLE PRAYER, ... 255

XV.

PETER IN PRISON, ... 271

XVI.

THE FIERY FURNACE, ... 289

XVII.

DANIEL IN THE LION'S DEN, ... 306

XVIII.

THE TENTH FOR GOD, ... 322

The Wells of Salvation.

I.

THE WELLS OF SALVATION.

"Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation."—Isaiah xii, 3.

THE Bible is a picture-gallery of vast extent. It was built by God the Father. Its foundations were laid and a portion of its superstructure reared more than four thousand years ago. The head-stone was brought forth and lifted into its place nearly eighteen hundred years ago. The building is divided into two sections, called the Old and the New Testaments. Each section consists of many halls or rooms—some large, others of less extent. In all, the rooms are sixty-six in number. Each room, with what it contains, is worth more than all the mansions and palaces and castles and temples ever built since the world was made. The walls of all the rooms in this famous and ancient gallery are hung with pictures of transcendent richness and beauty. The choicest treasures of London, of Paris, of Dresden, of Florence, and of Rome, pale into insignificance when compared with the pictures with which our Bible is filled. The artist who painted them is God the Son. He was the Master Painter. Other artists, who worked with him,

under his constant supervision and control, were Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, Solomon, Isaiah, Matthew, Luke, John, Paul, and many more. The gallery is open at all hours of the day, and every day in the week. All may enter free of charge, and remain as long as they choose. The beggar in his rags as well as the king in his royal robes, the pauper as well as the merchant prince, the barbarian as well as the philosopher, may wander through these gorgeous halls, feasting their eyes upon beauties at which "angels desire to look," and feel that the whole is theirs.

A person equal in wisdom and power to Him who built the gallery and to Him who painted the pictures, stands ready to serve as Guide to every visitor who enters the place. God the Holy Ghost will lead us through every department and room, and show us every picture from the beginning to the end. The Holy Ghost promises to "guide into all truth" all those who carefully and prayerfully search and study the Word of God.

This morning I invite you to go with me into that room in God's great art gallery which bears the name "Isaiah," and study one of the many pictures which hang upon its walls. Let us ask the Divine Spirit to go with us, and explain what we see. The gilded frame which holds the painting is our text: "With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation."

What do you see on the canvas within the framework of these words? I see a large and beautiful city, built on a rocky eminence in the midst of a vast and fertile plain. Lofty walls, strengthened by many buttresses, and adorned and guarded by many gateways

and towers, surround the place. Over the summit of the highest tower, which seems to touch the sky, floats a snow-white banner, emblazoned with a crimson cross. Under the walls, at the base of the rock on which the city stands, I see a group of wells. The number I can not tell. They are surrounded and shaded by a cluster of graceful and gigantic palms. In the distance, partially hidden by a cloud of dust, I see the rear guard of a retreating and routed army, by which the city was lately surrounded and besieged. The siege was long and distressful. The enemy planted their engines of war between the city and the wells. The people had no water to drink. Thousands died of thirst. All homes and hearts were filled with anguish, when suddenly their absent King appeared, scattered the frightened foe, brought salvation to his joyful citizens, and entered his capital in triumph. Seated on his throne, he issued a royal decree, and sent his heralds to publish it through the streets: "With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation!" The people hear the joyful sound. The gates are thrown wide open. With music and laughter and shouting, I see them crowding around the wells and drawing up the liquid life in overflowing buckets. All ranks, all races, all conditions, all ages, rejoice and drink, and drink and rejoice, and praise their gracious King who dug the wells, and made their waters secure and free.

That is a symbolic and a prophetic picture. Painted seven hundred years before, it was designed to foretell the spiritual blessings which should result from Christ's victory over sin, death, and hell. It delineates the blessings which are ours, who live in this dispensation—the dispensation of the Holy

Ghost. The picture is symbolic. The city represents the Church of God on earth; the water which the wells of salvation yield is a symbol of the Christian religion.

This is not the only place in God's Word where the benefits which flow from true religion are compared to water. In this same Book of Isaiah we read: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters!" These waters mean religion. The prophet Ezekiel had a vision, in which he seemed to be standing near the door of the Holy Place in the temple of God; "and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward," and they became "a river that" he "could not pass over." That river of water represents religion. The psalmist says: "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters." These waters mean religion. To the Samaritan woman whom he met at the well, Jesus said: "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again. But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." By water the Great Teacher means the religion of which he was the Author and Center. On the seventh and last day of the Feast of Tabernacles, while the high priest was pouring water, brought from the sacred Pool of Siloam, out of a golden pitcher upon the grand altar in the temple, Jesus stood and cried, saying: "If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Christ had the blessedness of religion in mind when he used those remarkable words. In

his vision of the heavenly world, granted him for his sake and ours when in exile on Patmos, John saw "a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." It flowed along the middle of the principal street of the city, and was bordered with two rows of trees, which yielded twelve kinds of fruit. What is that river of water of life but the Christian religion, by which souls are borne to heaven, and which souls will enjoy eternally in heaven? In the last verse in the Bible but four we hear a blessed invitation to thirsty, dying souls: "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." The religion of Jesus Christ is the water of life. The Christian religion is like water in many respects. I will mention four.

First, *Religion is like water because it is pure.* Water is pure. I do not mean the water which fills the hollows in our streets after a shower. That might aptly represent the religion of the Hindoos. I do not mean the water which lies stagnant and scummy in the fever-breeding swamp. That might represent the religion of China. I do not mean the bitter, blistering brine which fills the sea which rolls where once the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah stood. That might represent the corrupt and rotten religion of apostate Rome. I mean the water which bubbles up in the bottom of the well, drawn from the severed arteries and veins of mother earth, buried below the reach of pollution and taint. The purity of such water represents the purity of the true Christian faith.

Fill your pitcher at the well, under the overarching trees, out of the "old oaken bucket." How pure the

water looks as it leaps out of the bucket into the pitcher! How pure it looks when you have filled your glass, and raise it to your lips to drink! Hold the goblet up between your eyes and the sun. Can you detect any trace of impurity in the sparkling fluid? No! The intensest light the all-beholding sun can give fails to reveal a single speck. Pluck a blade of grass. On its emerald point take a pearly drop out of the brimming glass. Hold that single drop, unprotected, where the furious king of day can pierce it through and through with his flaming arrows. It quivers and sparkles and glows with all the rainbow's hues; but it reveals no sign or shade of pollution. Put the same drop in the focus of the most powerful microscope ever constructed, an instrument under which a speck of dust looks like a mass of rock, a hair like a huge cable, the wing of a fly like the sail of a ship, and the skin on your hand like the hide of a rhinoceros. What do you see? Nothing but water. The drop seems much larger than before, but no less pure.

A drop taken from that vase of flowers, or from the puddle in the street, would be found, under the microscope, to contain hundreds and thousands of living things swimming in what, to them, seems like a large-sized lake. Looking through the microscope at a drop from the well, you find it perfectly empty and perfectly pure.

So it is with true Christianity. Expose it to the most intense light. Subject it to the severest and most prolonged investigation. Study it through the most learned and critical eyes. It does not reveal a single speck. It is perfectly pure. I speak now of

the real Christianity, contained in and revealed by the Bible. I dare to declare, in the hearing of all the ages and all the nations, that the religion of the Bible is perfectly pure.

There are many systems of religion called Christianity which are as full of corruption as swamp water is of animalcules. They carry miasm and death wherever they flow. I ask you to distinguish between the false and the true. I ask you to turn away from the mud-puddle and swamp and ocean-brine, and drink your fill of the pure, sparkling water of the "wells of salvation."

Infidelity has toiled for centuries, day and night, using the severest tests and the most powerful microscopes, trying to find something impure in the Christian religion. With all the help that Satan could give, and all the agencies and instruments which hell could furnish, they have utterly failed in their attempt. You will certainly fail if you attempt the same impossibility. You can find specks in the character of the best Christian you ever knew. You can not find a speck in Christianity. You can find impurities in Romanism and Lutheranism and Calvinism and Presbyterianism and Baptistism and Methodism, and all the other isms; but you can not find the slightest shade of impurity in Christianity.

Men, calling themselves Christians, have covered themselves with infamy. But there is no infamy in Christianity. The most monstrous crimes have been committed in the name of Christianity. But Christianity is not a crime. The most loathsome vices have sought to defend themselves behind Christianity. But Christianity does not defend vice. The religion of the

Bible is perfectly pure, like the water of the purest well. You can drink your fill with perfect safety. It is just what your thirsty soul requires.

Second, *Religion is like water because it has the power to purify.* Being pure itself, it makes other things pure. In the every-day affairs of life, water is the universal agent for cleansing everything which needs to be cleansed. With water we wash our bodies. With water we wash our clothing. With water we wash our food. With water we wash the dishes in which our food is cooked and from which we eat. With water we wash our houses. With water nature washes the air, the trees, the grass, the streets, and the entire face of the earth. If God had not given us water for cleansing, universal filth would long ago have choked all the streams of life, and made the earth an uninhabitable waste.

What water is to the physical world, as a cleansing agent, Christianity is to the moral and spiritual world. Society and the human heart are full of pollution and filth. There is no way in which they can be cleansed but by the sanctifying power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Art will not cleanse human hearts or human society. Science will not. Intellectual refinement will not. The diffusion of wealth will not. What men call civilization will not. But the religion of the cross of Calvary will.

You may make a man, or a community of men, as wealthy as Crœsus, as learned as the best scholars of Germany, as refined as the son of an emperor, and as polite as a Parisian belle, and he will still be impure. But take him to the "wells of salvation," and let him bathe in the water of life, and, though he were

the vilest wretch that ever disgraced the name of man, he will become as white as snow.

The religion of the Bible is perfectly pure, and it has the power to make all who truly embrace it perfectly pure. If all men were Bible Christians, earth would be the anteroom of heaven. He who dug the "wells of salvation," he who is the author of our holy Christianity, desires to cleanse the whole world, and make it what it was before the fall; for I hear him saying to every human being, in his Word: "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness and all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and will give you a heart of flesh."

The water of the wells of salvation will cleanse society, as well as individuals. It will wash away all the filth of the world. This world is like the stables of Augeus. Augeus was king of ancient Elis. He owned immense herds of cattle and flocks of sheep. His stables had not been cleaned for very many years. Men said they never could be cleaned. The hero Hercules was commanded to perform the work. He saw at once that the task was too great for shovel and pick and human strength. So he dug a canal, so as to unite two rivers, and pour their commingled floods through the stables. Thus they were thoroughly cleansed in the space of a few hours.

The waters which flow from the "wells of salvation" unite to form a mighty river. Ezekiel saw that river in his vision, and said: "It shall come to pass that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whither-

soever the river shall come, shall live: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh." The Church of God is at work, trying to turn this river so that it shall flow through every nation and city and tribe and family, and cover the whole globe with its healing waves. It will wash away all rum-shops, all brothels, all gambling-dens, all jails, all prisons, all thrones of oppression, all unjust laws, all unholy customs, all caste, all superstition, all bigotry, all idolatry, all hate, all lust, all crime, and make this sin-cursed earth smile and bud and blossom like the garden of the Lord. The world is an Augean stable. If you think that is too strong a word, study the politics of this and other nations; estimate the number and magnitude of the evils of intemperance; read the records of the dark and bloody crimes which are committed every night; hear the stories of private vice which come to your ears on the breath of every wind; listen to the hoarse murmurs of the communistic mob, gathering in the distance to sweep away all the institutions of civilization and to draw society back into barbarism. Look, listen, reflect, and tell me if the world is not like the stables of Augeus. How can it be cleansed? In no way but by the power of the religion of Christ. In no way but by deluging it with the waters which flow from the "wells of salvation."

Third, *Religion is like water because it refreshes and revives.* See that deer pursued by the hunters and the dogs. They have chased him over many miles of plain and rocks and thickets. He has almost lost the power to flee. His eyes glare like balls of fire. His hot breath comes in puffs and gasps. His swollen

tongue hangs from his foam-dripping mouth. His heaving flanks are covered with sweat and dust. The baying hounds are close upon his heels. He will soon be the prey of their cruel teeth. But, hark! What is that sound which I hear above the uproar of the chase? It is the murmur of flowing waters. Behind that clump of trees I see a pool, into which leaps a foaming cascade from the mountain side. The hunted deer saw it first. He reaches the margin of the pool. He plunges in. For a moment he is hidden from the eyes of the dogs. He bathes. He drinks. He swims. He emerges on the other side. He seems like a new creature. The dust, the sweat, the foam, the fever, the glare, the weakness, are gone. Revived, refreshed, invigorated, he shakes the dripping water from his flanks, bounds up the mountain steep, and hides himself in the safe pastures on the other side.

I see a desert tract. The earth is covered with sand, as hot as if scorched in an oven. Through the sand a few stunted shrubs have pushed their way. Under one of the shrubs lies a child almost dead. A few paces off, sitting on the ground, with her back to the child and her face in her hands, is a woman, the mother of the dying boy. By her side is an empty bottle, from which the last drop of water has gone. She is sitting thus that she may not see the death-agonies of her child. In her despair she weeps aloud. God sees and hears from his throne on high. A hand appears, pointing her to a well not far away. She goes with joyful haste, and fills the empty bottle. Returning, she bathes the lips of the unconscious child. He revives. He drinks. He opens his eyes. He springs to his feet. His former energy and fire come back.

He goes forth into the perils of the desert. Ishmael becomes a great nation, whose power is felt in the East to-day.

Did you ever come out from under the torrid glare of the noontide sun, hot, weary, thirsty, fainting, breathless, into the shade of the trees which bend above the moss-grown well-curb, and drink long draughts of sweetest nectar fresh from the frigid depths? If you have, you know how water refreshes and revives.

What water is to the body, in this respect, the Christian religion is to the soul. The soul, as well as the body, becomes weary and breathless, and sinks down, fainting by the way. As heat and toil and thirst exhaust the body, so trials and temptations and disappointments and afflictions exhaust the soul. There is only one thing in the universe which can revive and refresh a weary soul. That one thing is the religion of Jesus Christ.

Are you weary? Have you met with nothing but disappointments since you set out on the journey of life? Are you beset with temptations? Are your trials many and great? Have sorrows settled down upon you like a fog? Does everything seem to go wrong? Are you utterly disheartened and discouraged? Lift up your fainting head! Behold the "wells of salvation!" Listen to the invitations of the gospel! Hear the blessed Savior's words: "Come unto me all ye that are weary!" Hear the Spirit's call: "Let him that is athirst come!" Go! Drink of the water of life freely, and your soul will be filled with life and freshness and courage and vigor and joy.

If you and I and all men would embrace the religion of the Bible in its fullness, there would be no

weary, discouraged, fainting souls; exhilaration and hope would fill every heart, and the whole world would sing for joy. Say, why do we languish and pine, when the "wells of salvation" are so near?

Fourth, *The Christian religion is like water because it is indispensable to the life of man.* I state what everybody knows when I say that it is absolutely impossible for the human body to live without water. Life may be preserved for several days without a drop of drink. But, sooner or later, there must come a period of unutterable agony, ending in a frightful death. It is doubtful if there is any bodily suffering more intense than that which attends death by thirst.

If you were adrift on the ocean in an open boat, or bound to a broken spar, under a tropical sun, and had been floating thus for many days without a drop of drink, what would you give for one goblet of water? If you had a million of dollars in gold on your person, and it would purchase one spoonful of cold, fresh water, you would make the exchange in an instant, and call it the best bargain ever made. In your estimation, one bead of water clinging to the "old oaken bucket," as it is drawn dripping from the cool well's bottom, would be worth more than a solid mass of gold as large as this globe.

It is said that a lonely traveler in the desert, having lost his way and wandered many days over the scorching sands without a drop of water, came at last, almost dead, in sight of something on the ground which looked like a leathern bottle, such as the Orientals use for carrying drink. Full of hope, he hastened on, expecting to quench his tormenting thirst. When he came to the spot he fell, overwhelmed with disappointment and despair. What he took to be a

bottle of water was nothing but a *bag of diamonds*. Many times—hundreds of times— men have been in circumstances where they would gladly have drawn the blood from their veins, and have paid it out for water at the rate of four drops for one.

There is such a thing as soul-thirst. In its extreme degrees, it is as much more tormenting than physical thirst as the ethereal, immortal spirit is greater in capacity and duration than this gross and dying body. Soul-thirst, unless relieved, ends—or rather culminates, it never ends—in eternal death. It was this soul-thirst which tormented the rich man in hades, when he begged that Lazarus might come and put one drop of water on his tongue.

The religion of the Bible is the only thing which can satisfy the thirst of the soul. It can satisfy with perfect satisfaction. Millions of thirsty ones have drank at the "wells of salvation," and have rejoiced with unspeakable joy. How grateful to the penitent heart—the heart which feels its need—is the Divine invitation: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters!"

Sinner, you must have salvation. You are dying of spiritual thirst. You feel not your need. Putting forth all your strength and spending all your time to secure the things which are seen, you forget that you have a soul which craves the unseen and the eternal. By and by you will wake up to the truth, and will feel the pangs of spiritual thirst. God grant that the waking may come on this side the grave, where the "wells of salvation" are! God made your soul with its immortal cravings. God also made the Christian religion to fill and satisfy the utmost capacity of your soul. Without the religion of the Bible you can never

know what real happiness is. Filled with its fullness, you will rise to higher joys than angels ever felt.

Come all! Come now! Come to the "wells of salvation!" I see them now. They are grouped around a central structure shaped like a cross. It is the cross of Jesus Christ. It is the derrick which was used in digging the wells. He who would come to the "wells of salvation" must pass under the outstretched arms of the blood-stained cross.

I can not tell how many the "wells of salvation" are. I can see four, at a single glance. There must be many more. They may be as numerous as the wells of Elim, which were twelve.

The first which I will name is the well of *Public Worship.* The waters of this fountain are very pleasant to those who are accustomed to its use. The Psalmist David prized it very highly. When driven away by the rebellion of his wicked Absalom, he mourned most bitterly because he could not drink his accustomed draughts at this well. "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!" he was heard to exclaim. "My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the courts of the Lord." All good Christians love the water of the well of Public Worship, and they agree that their spiritual health is greatly improved by its habitual use.

The second well is called *Social Worship.* This water ought to be drunk by all Christians very regularly and copiously. It has strong tonic properties, and is very useful when used in connection with that of the first well named. It has often been observed that those professed Christians who pass this well by are invariably weak and sickly, and usually soon lose their relish for the waters of all the other wells of sal-

Such men as Paul, Milton, Webster, Newton, and Jefferson, the intellectual giants of the race, declare most solemnly that the Holy Scriptures are beyond comparison the grandest and most wonderful of all the books in the world. They themselves were happy in the privilege of drinking from this exhaustless fountain. Though this well is so deep, the shortest and feeblest intellect can reach the water and drink to its heart's content. All who drink declare that it is "sweeter than honey and the honey-comb."

An important question remains to be answered: How shall we draw from the "wells of salvation?" The answer is as direct as the question. We must draw with the rope and bucket of *faith*. This is the only way. You may come to the wells every day. You may lean over the curbs, and see your face reflected in the water: but not a drop can touch your lips unless you draw with the rope of faith. With this, any child can draw. Without this, the strongest and most gifted man must go away unsatisfied.

You may attend the public and social worship, you may pray and read the Bible; but your soul will receive no benefit unless you have faith. With the rope of faith in your hand, you can draw the water of life with joy out of the wells of salvation. Such joy this poor, sin-stained earth never knew. O, come to the wells of salvation! They are free to all. No money is demanded of poor or rich. Come one and all! Come now! Come as you are! But be sure that you bring the rope of faith. Then "with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation."

II.

BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST.

"Tekel: Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting."—DANIEL v, 27.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR THE GREAT sat on the throne of Babylon, and of the world, for the period of forty-three years. His was the first universal empire. He was a proud, conceited, passionate, ambitious, idolatrous, and cruel monarch. Such he was till God had disciplined him with the seven-lashed scourge of affliction. Then, in the latter part of his reign, he came to himself, and said: "Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those who walk in pride he is able to abase." We have reason to believe that Nebuchadnezzar died in the faith, and that his soul is now with his Redeemer in glory.

Nebuchadnezzar was succeeded in the kingdom by his son, Evil-Merodach. Evil-Merodach was a weak prince. At the end of two years he was murdered by his sister's husband, Neriglissar, who took his place and reigned four years. Neriglissar's successor was his son, Laborosoarchod, whom his subjects murdered nine months after he mounted the throne. The next, and the last, king of Babylon was Nabonadius, the husband of Nebuchadnezzar's daughter. He associated his son, Belshazzar, with himself as assistant king,

and reigned seventeen years. While Nabonadius and Belshazzar were associate kings, the city of Babylon was taken, and the empire of Babylon was ground to dust, and scattered by the four winds of heaven.

At this point I invite you to step out of the direct line of my discourse, and examine, with me, the ruins of one of the strongholds of infidelity. The Bible represents Belshazzar as being the last king of Babylon. Secular history, in its more familiar chapters, says that Nabonadius was the last king of Babylon, and that he was absent when his capital fell. Infidels used to point to this apparent contradiction, and say: "See there! Your Bible contradicts the records of history. Your Bible is a lie!" Christian scholars hardly knew what reply to make, till, in 1854, Sir Henry Rawlinson opened a new chapter in Babylonian history, or an old chapter newly discovered, and read: "King Nabonadius associated his son, Belshazzar, with him in the kingdom." The seeming contradiction between sacred and secular history vanished. The Bible shone out through the clouds with dazzling brilliancy. Another of the breastworks of Satan was carried by storm; and infidels were compelled to flee and hide themselves in forests and swamps, and in dens and caves of the earth. Nabonadius was the last king of Babylon. He went out of the city, with an army, to fight the Medes and Persians in a distant province of the empire. So secular history is true. Belshazzar was the last king of Babylon. He staid in the capital to defend it against the army of Cyrus. So the Bible is true. The Bible nowhere says there was no such a man as Nabonadius. It hints that there was when it says that Daniel was made the "third ruler in the kingdom." If there had been no other

king than Belshazzar, Daniel would have been made the *second* ruler in the kingdom. O ye infidels, see how powerless are the weapons with which ye hope to overthrow the Word of God, and to save yourselves from that punishment which your sins deserve!

Belshazzar, the last king of Babylon, made a great feast, on the last night of his life. It was the anniversary of one of the gods which he worshiped. The feast was spread in the banqueting-hall of the royal palace. It was the "New Palace," so called, that magnificent structure which Nebuchadnezzar had built for the honor of his majesty forty years before. It was a city in itself. It was seven miles in circuit. It was surrounded with three walls, one within another, with considerable spaces between them. It was most splendidly decorated with statues and paintings of men and of animals. Within the walls of that marvelous palace were those famous "hanging gardens," which the world has agreed to number among its "seven great wonders." They rose above the city, with terrace after terrace, supported on arches, so solid and yet so airy that the superstructure seemed like a forest-clad mountain suspended between the heavens and the earth. The "New Palace" stood on the eastern bank of the river Euphrates. On the western bank rose the walls of the "Old Palace." Between the two were a bridge, above the waters of the river; and a subterranean passage beneath.

In the most sumptuous of all his palace halls, at a table groaning with burdens of massive plate and the rarest and richest viands from all parts of the earth, reclined the proud and voluptuous king. Around reclined a thousand of his lords and the fairest women of his harem. A more magnificent banquet

never was given or enjoyed. Golden lamps, hanging from a ceiling paneled with ivory and pearl, shed a soft luster on walls pillared with statues, on a floor paved with alabaster and carpeted with the richest rugs from the looms of India, on couches mounted with silver and cushioned with velvet, on bands of musicians, on troops of servants, on the proudest king, on the most illustrious princes, on the most gifted women, on the most gorgeous costumes, on the most bewildering splendor in all the world. Every heart in that glittering company was wild with delight. No one was troubled with care. No one dreamed of danger. No one thought of the morrow.

And yet it was a time of war. The fierce Medes and the warlike Persians were encamped around the city. But had they not been battering those proud walls in vain for more than forty-eight months? Could Cyrus ever take Babylon? "No," answered the best generals in the army. "No," answered the long files of soldiers who lined the ramparts, and laughed defiance at the baffled foe. "No," answered the vast storehouses within the city filled with provisions, and the cultivated acres of gardens and parks filled with growing food. "No," answered one hundred gates of clanging brass. "No," answered twice one hundred massive towers, as they stretched themselves upward toward the sky. "No," answered every brick in that mighty wall, as it spread itself out, eighty-five feet in thickness, and lifted its frowning front three hundred and thirty-five feet high. "No," answered the outlying ditch, embracing the city with sixty miles of flowing water, deep and wide. "No," hoarsely answered the majestic Euphrates as he poured his floods under the arches of the walls and through

the town. All facts, all circumstances, all theories, all opinions, all experiences, united to say: "Babylon can never be taken; Babylon will stand forever." And so the feast went on, and the sky of every mind was bright with hope and with fruition.

They had wine at that feast—not the unfermented juice of the grape which God praises and commends; but alcoholic wine, which inspiration calls "a mocker," "the wine of astonishment," "the poison of dragons and the cruel venom of asps," and on which it forbids us even to look. That wine flowed freely at Belshazzar's feast. Belshazzar challenged his lords to drink against him, declaring in boasting words that he could pour down more wine than any other man in the hall. Belshazzar drank until he was drunk. So did his lords. So did his ladies.

When a man is drunk, the devil has free access to his mind and heart. When the brain of that foolish king was inflamed with wine, the devil suggested a most impious deed, on whose execution he instantly resolved. Calling a servant, he ordered him to bring the golden and silver vessels which his grandfather, Nebuchadnezzar, had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem. They were brought and placed upon the table in a glittering row. They had been consecrated to the service of the most high God centuries before, and had never been put to any common use. For any man to use them, unless he were a heaven-appointed priest serving at the altar of Jehovah, would be sacrilege of the most damning kind. Belshazzar knew that; he knew who the God of the Hebrews was. His guests knew that Nebuchadnezzar, near the close of his reign, had embraced the Jewish faith, and published a decree recommending all his subjects to follow

his example. It is probable that he made a determined effort to establish the true religion throughout the whole extent of his empire. Belshazzar was the champion of the old idolatry. Bel was his god. His name means prince of Bel. He hated Jehovah, and resolved to insult and defy him in the presence of that great company. And so, at his command, those consecrated vessels, which had been stolen out of the house of God, were filled with "the poison of dragons and the cruel venom of asps," and he, and his princes, and his wives, and his concubines, drank from them to the health of the gods of Babylon, whose images "of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone," adorned the hall where the wild revel was held. They praised the gods of Babylon. They cursed the God of heaven. Every heart was filled with pride and hate; and every right hand was raised threateningly toward heaven. The hall resounded with the clash of goblets and flagons and the shouts of the drunken idolaters, and the discordant sounds rolled out over the city.

Suddenly a cry of terror and agony, above the uproar of the revel, arrested the attention of the frantic banqueters. There sat one of their number, as pale as marble, pointing to an object on the wall near the ceiling. He could not speak. His arm, his body, his eyelids, seemed to be frozen; they were frozen with fear. Every eye followed the direction of the upraised arm. With horror unutterable they saw—the fingers of a human hand, holding a style and writing on the wall. They saw only the fingers. The rest of the hand, the wrist, the arm, the body of him who wrote, were invisible. They saw the fingers moving the pen along the wall. They saw the letters taking shape. Then pen and hand vanished, and nothing remained

but the writing. At that the banqueters stared, transfixed with speechless terror.

No one was so frightened as the king. He knew the writing meant his doom. At length he spoke. "Bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers, that they may read the writing, and tell us its meaning." They came; they could not read. They could only stand and stare like the rest.

Then, at the suggestion of the queen-mother, the widow of Nebuchadnezzar, who had not taken part in the impious feast, but had come into the hall to learn what the tumult was, Daniel, the prophet of the Lord, was called. He stood before the frightened monarch. He was an old man; more than eighty years had passed over his head. But the same fire burned in his soul and sparkled in his eye as when he stood before Nebuchadnezzar to interpret his dream. "Read that inscription, and tell me its meaning," said the king, "and thou shalt be clothed with scarlet, and have a golden chain about thy neck, and shalt be the third ruler in the kingdom." Daniel declined the proffered honors, but promised to interpret the writing. First, he reminded the monarch of his grandfather's sin and punishment. Then he said: "And thou, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this; but hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know; and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified.

Then was the part of the hand sent from him; and this writing was written."

Then Daniel read the inscription. The words were Chaldaic, written in some strange character which the king and his courtiers did not know. They were "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin," "Numbered, Weighed, Divided." Then the prophet gave their hidden meaning. "*Mene:* God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. *Tekel:* Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. *Upharsin:* Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians."

While these scenes were taking place in the palace of Babylon, great events were taking place without. For many months, Cyrus and his army had been engaged in cutting a new channel for the river, so as to turn its course, and leave its bed dry where it flowed through the city. They also intended to use the empty bed of a large artificial lake, which Nebuchadnezzar had excavated to receive the waters of the river while he was building the walls of his capital. The design of Cyrus was carefully hidden from his enemies. Having been informed by deserters that on a certain night the Babylonians would celebrate an annual festival by drinking themselves drunk in honor of their gods, he fixed upon that night for the execution of his plan. He divided his army into three detachments. One part he sent to break down the dams, and let the river flow away from its accustomed channel. The second he stationed at the place where the river entered the city, and the third where it came out, with orders to enter the channel as soon as they could, and march toward each other till they should meet. The dams

were broken down, the waters filled the lake and the trench, and the bed of the mighty stream was left almost dry.

At midnight, while Belshazzar and his lords were deriding the Persians over their cups, the army of Cyrus passed under the walls, and marched silently along the channel to a point near the center of the great palace. The brazen gates leading to the river had been left unbarred; and the guards were too drunk to make any resistance, or to sound the alarm. In rushed the exultant Persians, and spread themselves through the besotted city. While Daniel was reading the handwriting on the wall, a hostile band was in the palace. When he said, "Upharsin: Thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians," they were in the entry of the banqueting-hall. There they encountered the royal body-guard. A scuffle ensued. Hearing the noise, the king snatched his sword and ran to the door. There he met a line of glittering steel, and was hewed in pieces in a moment. Over his mangled corpse, Darius the Mede passed to the throne of Babylon and of the world. While the body of Darius was being lifted by his lords up the steps of the throne of universal empire, the soul of Belshazzar was being dragged by devils down into the prison-house of eternal despair. What a dreadful end to a banquet, to a kingdom, to a life, to a probation!

Those four words written on the wall of Belshazzar's palace, transferred to God's Book, and interpreted by God's prophet, have a value to us. I have chosen one of them as the text of this evening: "Tekel: Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting." To every soul in this house, to every soul on

this planet, it might truthfully be said: "Thou art weighed in the balances."

In the first place, *men weigh themselves.* In weighing themselves, men use a false balance. The balance which men use in weighing themselves is "*self-conceit.*" This is a very unjust instrument for weighing. It is natural for us to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think. We are strongly inclined to overlook our faults, and fasten our eyes admiringly upon our excellences, real or fancied. If we have faults too glaring to be wholly unseen, we minify them; while we greatly magnify our virtues. When we examine our defects, we stand afar off, and look at them through a telescope, whose large end is at our eye. When we examine our redeeming qualities, we get as near as we can, and put the small end of the instrument in front of the organ of vision. The thought I am trying to bring out is very forcibly expressed in an old heathen fable, which says: "When Jupiter created man, he put his faults in one bag, and his virtues in another, and hung them by cords around his neck, so that the bag containing his good qualities should be in front, where they would always be in sight, and the bag containing his bad qualities should be behind, where they could never be seen." The balance of self-conceit is a very unjust instrument for weighing. The beam is not suspended by the middle. One arm is much longer than the other. The difference between the two arms is so great that, in some instances, a pound in one scale has been known to make a ton's weight kick the beam on the other side. Thus men weigh themselves, and say: "I am not wanting."

In weighing themselves, men not only use a false balance, but they use false weights as well. One false

weight is the reputation of a fallen minister. I believe that the pastors of our Protestant Churches are, as a class, the purest and noblest of men. They have entered the sacred calling as from no other motive than a desire to glorify God and save souls. They teach holiness by precept and example. But now and then there is a black-hearted man among them, as there was in the college of the apostles, who has taken up the ministry from base and worldly and impure motives. There are others, still, who were pure at the beginning; but who, falling under the power of temptation, are overcome and enslaved by lust and sin. That man yonder who would rather weigh himself than have God weigh him, reads in a newspaper about the fall of a minister. Perhaps he has forged a note. Perhaps he has stolen a horse. Perhaps he has poisoned his wife. Perhaps he has got intoxicated. The man throws down the paper, and rubs his hands together in perfect delight. Then he gets out his old balance of "self-conceit," throws the reputation of the mud-bespattered clergyman into the pan which hangs from the short arm of the lever, and jumps with all his weight into the other pan. Of course, his side goes down, and the other goes up. Then he sits with folded arms despising the other, and admiring and praising himself. "I am a much better man than that reverend gentleman. I am good enough. I am very good. I shall certainly go to heaven when I die." How many expect to ride into the New Jerusalem on the back of the sins of renegade preachers of the gospel! My friend, if all the clergymen of all the Churches should turn out to be drunkards and murderers, your chances for eternal life would not be bettered one iota. You can not make a ton out

of sixteen ounces by weighing them against an imperfect standard. You can not make your black heart white by comparing it with a heart still blacker than your own.

Another false weight is the *inconsistencies of Church members.* The Church is the household of God. Its members are the salt of the earth. They are the true nobility of God's earthly government. They are the fairest of the sons of men. Take them out of the world, and the world would be a moral waste; society would become a pandemonium; humanity would soon sink to the level of the demons. And yet there is no Church which can show one faultless member. Every denomination, and perhaps every local Church, has hypocrites among its members. Some men go into the Church to cloak their crimes. There are bad men in the Church. If you would find the meanest man that lives, look for him in the Church. Many will go from the Church to the lowest chambers of hell. There are many others in the Church who have been regenerated by the Spirit of God, and who really intend to live a Christian life, but who, through neglect of watchfulness and prayer, fall into the snares of Satan, and bring reproach on the name of Christ.

Now that foolish man yonder, with "the balances of deceit in his hand," spends much of his time in scrutinizing the conduct of the professors of Christianity. He neglects his own weedy garden, that he may watch the growth of the weeds in his neighbor's field. When he has caught that Christian neighbor in an act which the Bible condemns, he is as happy as though he had discovered a "pearl of great price." Forthwith he picks up the wicked thing, and flourishes it before the world with undisguised joy, exclaiming,

"See there; see what that Christian has done!" Then he puts it in one of the pans of his unjust balance, and some good act which he himself performed long ago in the other pan, and, holding up the unequal scales, cries aloud: "See how much better I am than that Church member! If he is on the way to heaven, so am I! I have no cause to fear! If there is any such thing as Christianity, I am a Christian!" If God should speak to that man, he would say: "Every one shall give account of himself to me." My friend, if you had six ounces of gold, you could not make it a pound by weighing it in a false balance against clipped weights. You may deceive the world, and cheat yourself, by hiding your sins under the imperfections of those who call themselves Christians, but you can not deceive the Omniscient One. If, at the judgment-bar, every Church member, from Abel to the last convert baptized just before the sounding of the resurrection trump, should be proved a hypocrite, your condemnation would not be diminished a feather's weight; your banishment from the presence of God and his holy angels would be just as certain and as terrible. If you are honest, and wish to know your exact standing before God, you will not compare yourself with other imperfect men; you will compare yourself with Christ, the Perfect Man. If you would know just what your moral and spiritual avoirdupois is, use a perfect balance; use standard weights, which have been examined and stamped by the Great Sealer of weights, whose office is in heaven.

There are other false weights which men use in weighing themselves. I can not name them all. The time will not permit. I pass to a more important thought. *God weighs men.* In weighing men, God

uses a perfect balance. Its beam is suspended exactly in the middle. The two arms are equal; they do not differ by the thickness of a hair. If equal weights are placed in the two pans, the beam rests perfectly level. God's balance is sensitive to the last degree. It weighs men's acts; it weighs their words; it weighs their thoughts; it weighs their impulses; it weighs their most secret motives; it weighs their character. Every act, every word, every thought, every impulse, every motive, of every responsible human being, has been accurately weighed, and its weight set down in the book of the Divine memory. At the judgment of the great day, that book will be opened, and the living and the dead will be judged out of those things which are written in the book, according to their works. If you ask the name of God's balances, I answer, "Justice"—perfect, rigid, impartial, absolute justice.

In weighing men, God uses just weights, which have been tested by a perfect standard. *Conscience* is one weight. God weighs every man against conscience. Into one pan he puts the man who is to be weighed—all his acts, words, and thoughts. Into the other pan he puts the man's own conscience. If the man has always listened to the voice of conscience, and obeyed it perfectly, without a moment's hesitation, the beam hangs even, and God smiles with pleasure and approbation. Otherwise, the beam inclines, and God frowns and says: "Wanting! wanting!"

My friend, have you always hearkened to the "still small voice," which speaks to you out of your own soul? When your moral character, your life, is weighed against your own conscience, do you not go up, while conscience goes down? Do you not hear the Divine voice, saying: "Thou art weighed in the

balances, and art found wanting?" All men, even the heathen, are weighed against conscience. Who of us has always obeyed conscience perfectly? Alas! we must all hang our heads in shame, and confess that we are wanting when thus we are weighed.

Another weight which God uses in weighing men is *knowledge*. Into one scale he puts the sum of all the man's acting and speaking and thinking. Into the other he puts all that the man knows, or might know, of duty and obligation. If the man has always lived up to all the light and knowledge he has received, earnestly seeking all the time for more knowledge and light, the beam hangs level, and the Divine face is wreathed with smiles. Otherwise, the Judge frowns, and "Wanting! wanting!" is the verdict which issues from his lips. My friend, have you always availed yourself of all the knowledge within your reach, striving to do the perfect will of Heaven? Have you always done the very best you knew how? You dare not say "yes" to that question. You dare not utter such a lie as that would be. You must confess that you are wanting, fearfully wanting, when weighed against what you know. God weighs all men, even the heathen, against the weight of all the spiritual light they possess, or might receive.

Another weight which God uses in weighing men is *opportunity*. Into one scale he puts the man's character and life. Into the other he puts all the opportunities which he has ever enjoyed for getting and doing good. If the weight of what the man has done, and is, equals the sum of all his opportunities for good, well. If not, God says: "Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting." After this manner God weighs all men, even the heathen. My friend,

your opportunities have been countless and measureless. They are like mountains in magnitude; like the drops of the ocean in number. Have you improved them all? Have you improved every Sabbath which has dawned upon you; every gospel sermon which has been preached in your hearing; every word of godly advice which has been spoken in your ear; every prayer which has ascended to heaven in your behalf; every example of holy living which you have witnessed; every occasion presented you to glorify the Master and bless your fellow-men? You can not say, "I have." You are weighed in the Divine balances against the enormous weight of your golden opportunities, and are found wanting. Between your moral weight and the weight of your opportunities there is a greater disparity than in the case of the most degraded heathen beneath the stars.

One more weight must be named which God uses in weighing men. It is the *Bible*. He uses this weight only in weighing those to whom the Bible has been given. He uses it when he wishes to learn the avoirdupois of your soul. O, what a disparity there is between your character and this Book! It is as great as the difference between the weight of a mountain and the weight of a feather. Compared with this standard, you are fearfully wanting, unconverted man, in those qualities of heart without which you can never see the kingdom of God. Weighed against the character of fallen ministers and hypocritical or backslidden Church members, you may make a fair show. But when you are weighed against the precepts of the Holy Bible, the "Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever," the whole universe crys: "Wanting! wanting! wanting!"

God weighed Belshazzar. He weighed his acts. He was a drunkard, a debauchee, an idolater, a cruel and heartless tyrant. He weighed his words. He was a blasphemous scoffer against the truth. He weighed his thoughts. He was full of pride and malignity and selfishness. In all these, the king of the Chaldeans was found wanting. But he was wanting more in something else. God said to him, through Daniel: "O Belshazzar, thou hast not humbled thine heart, but hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified." Belshazzar was "found wanting," was rejected, was slain, was damned, chiefly because he had not humbled himself and glorified his God.

You, my unregenerate friend, are wanting, in that you have not humbled your heart, but have lifted up yourself against the Lord of heaven, and that God in whose hand your breath is and whose are all your ways, you have not glorified. If you have done right, it has been to please yourself, not to please God. You are weighed; you are found wanting; you are rejected; you are in danger of eternal condemnation. Weighed in the balances of "self-conceit," against the clipped and deficient standard of outward morality, and the lives of bad or imperfect men, you may not be seriously wanting. Weighed in the balances of the sanctuary, whose decisions are to fix the eternal doom of souls, against *conscience*, and *knowledge*, and *opportunity*, and the *Bible*, you are wanting almost to an infinite degree.

Some one may ask: "If souls are to be weighed in the balance of absolute justice, with weights which are conformed to a perfect standard, who is there who will not be found wanting? Who has always obeyed the

voice of conscience? Who has lived up to all the light he has received? Who has used all his opportunities? Who has observed all the precepts of the Holy Book?" Not one. "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Who, then, can be saved?

I think I see the answer to that question. I see a great, hard, rough, brown hand thrust down through the clouds. It holds a pair of balances. I can not see the being to whom the hand belongs, but I know he must be stern and just. In one scale is put the soul of the holiest man on earth. I speak of natural goodness. In the other scale is put his *conscience.* Up goes the soul. Then *knowledge* is put in with conscience. The soul rises still higher. Then *opportunity* is added to conscience and knowledge. The soul takes another upward start. Then the Bible is thrown into the scale with opportunity and knowledge and conscience. Now the scale which holds the soul takes a sudden bound, and strikes against the beam with an awful clang, which shapes itself into articulate sounds, and Wanting! Wanting! Wanting! rolls across the vault of heaven, with dismal reverberations, which are answered back by the demons of the pit with howls of exultant joy. The soul looks up to heaven, and humbly prays for mercy. Now another hand appears. It is a soft, delicate, white hand. There is a ragged wound in the center of the palm. It holds itself over the soul. One drop of blood oozes from the wound and falls upon the scale. Instantly it begins to descend. Under the almost infinite weight of the single drop of blood the scale which holds the soul goes down, down, till the beam hands evenly poised; and a voice comes out of the cloud: "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin."

III.

NAAMAN THE LEPER.

"Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean."—2 KINGS v, 14.

LET us imagine ourselves to be living in the year 894 before Christ, instead of the year 1897 after Christ; and that our home is in the city of Damascus.

Damascus is the fairest city in all the world. It surpasses all other places in the beauty of its temples, the magnitude of its shrines, the loveliness of its climate, the limpidness of its fountains, the abundance of its waters, and the richness of its gardens. The plain, in the midst of which it stands, is a perfect earthly paradise. On the west and north rise the snow-crowned peaks of the mountains of Lebanon. Far away, on the east, stretches the great Arabian desert. On the south towers lofty Hermon, in alabaster whiteness, looking down upon the whole scene. Down from Lebanon, across the plain, flow two large rivers, the Abana and Pharpar, of crystalline purity, dividing and subdividing and giving perpetual moisture to every inch of soil. This region never knows scorching summer or freezing winter. From the beginning of the year to the end, it is filled with grass, and foliage, and waving grain, and gardens of flowers, and orchards of fruits, and vineyards of grapes, and spray of fountains, and songs of birds, and laughter of

children, and shouts of joyous sowers and harvesters. Out of the midst of this verdure, standing on both sides of the Abana, and surrounded with thick and lofty walls, rises the city, with tapering towers and swelling domes, like a diamond clasp on a velvet robe of emerald green.

We are standing in the principal street of the town. On either side is a palace. On the east, facing glorious Lebanon, rises in royal splendor and magnificence the residence of Ben-hadad II, king of Syria. On the other side is a splendid, but less magnificent mansion, which interests us more than the larger and costlier. As we are studying its architecture, a gate, on the left side, is suddenly thrown open, and out dashes a war-chariot drawn by four milk-white steeds. Close behind ride half a hundred men on horseback, richly uniformed and armed with flashing steel. In the chariot, behind the driver, stands a tall and noble-looking man, clad in complete armor, with a plumed helmet on his head, and a scarlet robe hanging from his shoulders.

I want you to look at that man. He lives in this palace. His name is Naaman. General Naaman they call him. For many reasons he is more to be envied than almost any other man in all the world. He is immensely rich. He has everything that money can buy. He lives in a palace. He has armies of servants to do his bidding. Everybody treats him with the greatest respect and reverence. He has a noble, manly character. He is the greatest soldier of the age. He has fought many bloody battles, and gained many glorious victories for his country. Everywhere he goes the people hail him, "Savior of Syria." He is the man who shot and killed his country's greatest enemy,

Ahab, king of Israel, at the battle of Ramoth-gilead. The people link his name with that of the Supreme Ruler of the Universe, and say, "God raised up our noble Naaman to be our liberator and savior." He is the commander-in-chief of the armies of Syria. There is only one man above him, King Ben-hadad, who honors and loves him as his dearest friend. Surely, if there is a person in the world who ought to be contented and happy, General Naaman is that person. But I am obliged to tell you that he is not. There is one fact in his life which spoils all his joy. There is one drop of gall in his cup of pleasure, which turns all its contents to bitterness and death. That one thing is so perfectly horrible that he would gladly exchange places with the meanest slave who calls him master. I hesitate to speak the word; but I must. Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, is a great man with his master, and honorable, because by him the Lord has given deliverance unto Syria; he is also a mighty man of valor; *but he is a leper.* He is a victim of that most terrible of all the diseases which war against human health and life—the Oriental leprosy.

One day, after he had been commissioned lieutenant-general of Syria, and had taken possession of this palace, he discovered a little pimple on his hand. The awful word "leprosy" instantly flashed through his brain. He chased it out, and tried to keep it out. He showed the pimple to no one, not even his wife. But it was never out of his mind during his waking moments, and he examined it a hundred times a day. He tried to make himself believe that it did not grow. But it did grow. After some weeks, smaller pimples sprung up around it as a center. He tried to keep

the diseased member out of sight. His wife saw it, but said not a word. The servants saw it, and whispered around the palace, "General Naaman has the leprosy." By and by the affected part assumed a whitish, scale-like appearance, with raw flesh underneath the scales. Then the general showed his hand to the king's physician, and asked him what the matter was. The doctor did not dare to speak the hateful word. So he called it by some long, jaw-breaking, scientific name. But Naaman was not fooled. He saw in the doctor's eye that he knew that he had the leprosy.

That was many months ago. Since then the infection has been rapidly spreading. A painful itching vexes the victim by day and by night. He has lost most of his hair. His eyebrows are gone. There are large ulcers on his cheeks. His palate is partly consumed. His voice, which used to ring out so clear and strong on the field of battle above all the din of the conflict, is husky and indistinct. The victim himself knows, his wife knows, all his servants know, the king knows, the army knows, all the people know, that the great and mighty and honorable Naaman, general-in-chief of the armies of Syria, is slowly dying, eaten up inch by inch by that most loathsome and painful and incurable of all diseases—the hated leprosy.

While Naaman is gone for a ride for his health, through the olive-yards and citron-groves of the plain of Damascus, I want to talk to you about another disease, from which many of us are suffering, a hundred times worse than the Oriental leprosy. In many places in the Scriptures the leprosy is used as a symbol of sin. Its relations to the body are very similar to the relations which sin bears to the soul.

First, *Leprosy is a loathsome disease.* It makes its

victim loathsome to all his neighbors, to his most intimate friends and kindred, and to himself. Who would be willing to sleep or eat or live or walk with a leper? Who would not flee at the sight of such corruption?

Sin is loathsome. It is moral corruption. It makes the soul loathsome. I speak the sober, unvarnished truth when I say that sin, when viewed as it is, is vastly more loathsome and disgusting than leprosy in its worst form. You know something of what leprosy can do for its victim. Now let inspiration describe sin in its most aggravated forms. If you turn to the first chapter of Isaiah, you will find these exact words: "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds and bruises and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment." That is the sinful soul. Not every sinner is as bad as that. But that is the condition toward which every sinner is rapidly tending.

Sin in its worst forms is loathsome to every one of us. All of you have seen sinners whom you could not endure. They were so vile you would be afraid to touch them for fear of contamination. I once stood on the steps of the "Tombs," in New York, while a squad of policemen were bringing in a prisoner whom they had just arrested. It was the most degraded specimen of humanity that I had ever had the misfortune to behold. And yet it was a female. Is it possible—thought I—for a woman to sink so low? I can not find words with which to paint the portrait of the hideous hag. I will not insult the brute creation by saying that she was brutal. She was simply devilish. I can not conceive how a fiend, raked up out of the

lowest abyss of the bottomless pit, could surpass her in vileness and hideousness. As I speak, I can almost hear her demoniacal screams, her horrid imprecations, and her obscene and filthy language, as the officers dragged her by me into the court-room. And yet—I said to myself—that woman was once a bright, happy, innocent little girl. Sin has made her what she is. I turned away, sick at heart, with such a loathing for sin as I had never felt before. Turn to the records of ancient times. Read the lives of those monsters of vice who wore crowns and wielded scepters among men in the centuries gone, and see if you do not loathe their very names. Think of the Ahabs and the Jezebels and the Herods and the Caligulas and the Neros and the Lucretia Borgias and the Henry the Eighths. Do you not loathe those blood-stained, crime-soaked wretches? Yet they were once beautiful, innocent children. It was sin that made them so loathsome and hateful. They were full of moral leprosy.

That sin is loathsome is proved by the fact that the convicted sinner loathes himself. His loathing of sin is in proportion to the depth of his conviction. A convicted sinner is simply one who knows and feels his sinful state. His eyes have been opened by the Spirit of God, so that he can see the scales and scabs and putrid ulcers with which his moral nature is completely covered. Some of the best sinners, when under conviction, have caught such a view of their inner rottenness and corruption that they have been overwhelmed with despair, and have pronounced their disease incurable. Thus it was with Paul, a man of intellect, of learning, of refinement, of outward morality. Before his eyes were opened, he deemed himself almost perfect. When the light of truth flashed upon

him from above, he was filled with astonishment and disgust. He saw himself bound, hand to hand, foot to foot, mouth to mouth, to a putrescent corpse. In the sudden agony of his soul, he exclaimed: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

When David saw his sins, he cried out to God: "There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin. For mine iniquities have gone over my head: as a heavy burden they are too heavy for me. My wounds stink and are corrupt because of my foolishness. I am sore troubled. I am bowed down greatly. I go mourning all the day long. For my loins are filled with a loathsome disease: and there is no soundness in my flesh." It was no physical disease of which he was complaining; he was trying to describe the exceeding loathsomeness of the leprosy of sin.

Leprosy is an hereditary disease. Parents transmit it to their children. One generation hands it down to the next. The offspring of lepers are said to be remarkably fair, at first; and, to all appearance, are as healthy as other children. But the seeds of the fatal malady are in their blood; and, sooner or later, it will show itself on a finger, or a cheek, or the nose. Thence it will spread till the whole body is covered with corruption.

Sin is hereditary. By sin, in this connection, I do not mean sin in outward act, but in the inward tendency. Inbred sin is hereditary. Adam and Eve took the disorder in Eden by yielding to the solicitations of Satan. The second generation took it from them; the third from the second; the fourth from the third;

and so on down to the present time. In the moral nature of every infant, when it comes into the world, lurks the virus of the leprosy of sin. We see no trace of its inner workings at first. The exterior is fair and beautiful. We call the babe innocent and angelic. It is, so far as actual transgression is concerned. But, by and by, a little pimple appears. It is anger, or selfishness, or falsehood. It grows. It spreads. It gains new strength with every added year and month, till it has covered every faculty of the soul with its scales and scabs.

Leprosy, among the Jews, shut out its victims from the society of all who were free from the disease. All lepers were pronounced unclean, and were driven out to live by themselves, in some lonely place. The law of Moses was very strict in this respect. It forbade a leper to come near a city, or village, or any human habitation. He must live in the fields. If he had companions, they must be unclean persons like himself. If he chanced to see any one in the distance, coming toward him, he was required by the law to uncover his head, put his hand over his mouth, and shout as loud as he could, "Unclean! unclean!" and then run as fast and far as he could in the opposite direction. The Jews once had a king who became a leper. What was done with him? Were law and custom suspended because he was a king? No. His servants dragged him down from his throne, stripped off his purple robes, led him out of his sumptuous palace, and shut him up in a pest-house, where he lived till death came and let him out.

Sin separates the sinner from among the pure. It compels him to dwell in solitude, or in the society of those who are like himself. This is the inevitable

tendency of sin. In this world the separation is but partial. But in the other world the separation will be complete and final. All the wicked will be in one place, and all the righteous in another. The Bible speaks of heaven. It also speaks of hell. Heaven is the everlasting abode of the righteous. It is sometimes called a city—the New Jerusalem. Hell is simply a place outside the City of God. Now, just as the law of Moses shut all lepers out of ancient Jerusalem, so the law of God shuts all sinners out of the New Jerusalem.

The reasons for this are two: First, God is determined to protect the good, and make their happiness secure and complete. One sinner in heaven would mar and destroy its perfection and beauty. God will protect himself, his angels, and his saints by barring the gates of the New Jerusalem against every soul which is tainted with the leprosy of sin. Again, the sinner has no desire to live in the City of God. What pleasure could he find in going there to display his corruption and loathsomeness on the golden sidewalks, along the evergreen banks of the River of Life? How would he feel, reeking with filth, in the palaces of pearl, in the sight of myriads of spotless angels and redeemed and sanctified men? If he should find himself there, he would hang his head in shame. He would cover his face with his hands. He would cry: "Unclean! unclean!" He would seek for a place where he could hide his putrid soul in darkness and oblivion. So the Almighty, in his infinite mercy and love, has provided a place outside of the city, a lazaretto, a pest-house, named hell, where all those who have the leprosy of sin will be shut up by themselves for ever and ever. It is a place which is exactly suited

to their condition; and, through eternity, there will never be heard a syllable of complaint that God was unjust in building such a place, or in confining them within its adamantine walls.

"But," says some one, "is not that a hard and cruel lot?" It is a hard lot. But it can not be helped. If men will be sinners, if they will leave this world with the leprosy of sin fastened upon their immortal souls, it is best for all concerned—best for God, best for the saints, best for the sinners themselves—that the pure and the impure should dwell apart—these in the city of Heaven, those in the pest-house of Hell. O, my unsaved friends, remember this: Your sins have separated between you and your God; and if they are not washed away, they will separate you from heaven.

Finally, the leprosy is incurable. There is not a single recorded or remembered exception to the law that leprosy is incurable by natural agencies. If ever a leper was cured, it was by the exercise of miraculous power. There is no pill, or plaster, or lotion, or ointment; no herb, or mineral; no decoction, or solution, or extract, which has the least power to stay the course of this fell disease, or mitigate its fearful pains. He who has the leprosy must die a leper. You can not cure a leper, any more than you could make a new man out of the dust of the ground.

Sin is incurable. No man was ever saved from a sinner's doom but by miraculous power. Sin can not be cured by nature. Art, science, and law have no medicine which will eradicate the virus of sin from the soul of man. Sin can not be cured by the power of the will, or by self-denial, or by ceremonies, or by sacraments, or by good works. The sinner may dress himself up in the robes of respectability and self-

righteousness. He may scrape off some of his bad habits by the vigorous use of the Turkish towel of culture and education. He may daub himself all over with the paint of outward morality. But he is a leper, a sinner, still. There are rottenness and corruption within. He will grow worse and worse, in spite of all that he can do.

The end of leprosy is a most dreadful death, in which the sufferer literally falls in pieces, member by member, limb by limb, organ by organ. From the beginning to the end, leprosy is a living death. The sinner's end is eternal death. "The wages of sin is death." "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." "This is the second death." Sin dooms the soul to a death which is infinitely more dreadful than the leper's death.

My friend, unless you have been born again, you are a spiritual leper; you have that loathsome, hereditary, incurable, deadly disease which the Bible calls sin. The only difference between you and such moral lepers as Ahab, Jezebel, Herod, Caligula, Nero, Lucretia Borgia, and Henry VIII, is that they had the disease in a more malignant form. The disease is the same, and, in the same circumstances, you might become as bad as the worst of them.

Whether you know it or not, you are a leper, a sinner. You may be rich in this world's goods; but you are a leper—a sinner. You may be honorable, as the world uses that word; but you are a leper—a sinner. You may be well-born and well-bred and educated and refined, but you are a leper—a sinner. You may be charitable and generous and virtuous; but you are a leper—a sinner. You may have everything which men call good and praiseworthy; but you

are a leper—a sinner. You may be almost persuaded to become Christian; but you are a leper—a sinner.

What became of General Naaman, the leper? He was healed by the power of Israel's God. How did it come about? Naaman's wife had, among her slaves, a little captive Hebrew girl, whose name has been lost; but who, herself, will never be forgotten. She knew and loved the God of her fathers. Among foreigners and idolaters, she held fast to the religion in which she had been instructed from her infancy. With the Spirit of God in her heart, she longed to do something which would benefit her fellow creatures and glorify her Creator. And so one day—after much prayer, we may presume—she said to her mistress: "Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy."

These strange words, spoken with the help of the Divine Spirit, quickly flew across the street to the royal palace, and into the king's ear. "Ah!" said Ben-hadad, "my general shall go to Samaria." As soon as might be, Naaman set out in his chariot, with a large and splendid retinue of armed horsemen and servants, and mules bearing tents and provisions for the journey, and ten suits of costly clothing, and fifty thousand dollars in money to pay the doctor. He would ask no favors; he would pay for all that he received.

A journey of about a hundred miles brought that gorgeous caravan to Samaria, the capital of the kingdom of Israel, and to the palace gate of King Jehoram. Naaman sent in a letter of introduction, which he had brought from Damascus. The king broke the seal. The letter was signed, "Ben-hadad, king of

Syria," and read: "With this letter I send to you my servant Naaman, that you may cure him of the leprosy." The king was filled with anger and fear. Turning to his officers, he exclaimed, as he rent his clothes: "Am I God, with power to kill and make alive, that this Ben-hadad sends to me to cure a man of leprosy? See how he is trying to pick a quarrel with me?"

While Jehoram and his cabinet were wrestling over that tough international problem, how to send back an answer which should avert war, a message came from the prophet Elisha, who had heard of the commotion at the palace: "Why hast thou rent thy clothes? Let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel." Word was passed out of the palace, "Go to Elisha."

Again the great caravan was in motion. Sitting in his gilded chariot in front of the humble dwelling of the man of God, surrounded by his armed horsemen and all his company, full of pride, Naaman waited for the prophet to come out and heal his leprosy. But no prophet presented himself. Instead, a servant came and spake, in Elisha's name: "Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean."

When Naaman heard these words, he was very angry, and gave orders to return to Damascus. "What!" said he, "have I, the commander-in-chief of the armies of Syria, come all this distance to be insulted by this contemptible Hebrew fortune-teller? I thought that he would come out to me, and call on the name of his God, and strike his hand on the place, and heal my leprosy. What an insult to send me, twenty miles, to bathe in the muddy waters of his miserable Jordan. If bathing will cure me, why may

I not wash in the crystal waters of my own Abana and Pharpar? They are better than all the waters of Israel." So he turned and went away in a great rage.

Why did Elisha treat Naaman so coolly and impolitely? Why did he not come out and do what his visitor would naturally expect him to do? The answer is easy. Naaman's soul was as full of pride as his body was of leprosy. Elisha saw that his pride must be humbled. He knew that the leper could not be healed till the sinner was abased. How strange that a loathsome leper like the Syrian general should be proud! Yet he was. How strange that the sinner, full of moral corruption and spiritual contagion, should be proud! What in the world has he to be proud of? Yet he is proud. Pride is the essence of sin. Before the sinner can be saved, he must crucify his pride. He must come down from his chariot of self-exaltation and self-righteousness, and prostrate himself in the very dust. You can not be saved, my unconverted friend, unless you will consent to do anything which God may require, or God's people may advise. You must be willing to confess your sins. You must be willing to ask the forgiveness of any person whom you may have injured. You must be willing to make a public profession of your acceptance of Christ. You must be willing to go forward for prayers. You must be willing to come to the anxious seat. You must be willing to kneel at this altar, by the side of the poorest man or vilest woman in all the town. You must be willing to do anything and everything, which is not wrong, in order to be saved from your sins. You must be willing that God should save you in his own way. If there is anything which you *will not* do, you can not be saved.

I knew a young lady who, for nearly three months, suffered the intolerable pangs of a convicted conscience, because she had said: "I will not go forward for prayers." God would not save her till she took that back. When she said, "I will do anything," and started for the anxious seat, God met her and saved her before she got out of her pew.

Naaman was so willful that he preferred to keep his leprosy, rather than humble his pride and go to the Jordan and wash. So he turned away, and started for home. If he could not have healing in his own way, he would not have it at all. There are sinners in these days who would rather keep their pollution and take it with them to perdition, than to submit to be saved in the simple and easy way which Infinite Wisdom has contrived.

But General Naaman had servants who were wiser than he. They ventured to approach him in his rage, and proffer him their advice. "My father," said they, "if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith unto thee, Wash, and be clean?" That is it. If men could earn salvation, wholly or partly, by doing some great thing, everybody would be saved. But now that eternal life is offered, without money and without price, on the easy terms of repentance and faith, the great mass of mankind spurn it from them in anger and pride. Naaman, however, was not a fool, if he was haughty and proud. He saw the point of the advice which his servants gave. He made no reply; but ordered the cavalcade to face to the right, and march toward the Jordan.

O how precious is the counsel of a wise and honest friend! If Naaman had rejected the advice of his serv-

ants, he would have carried his leprosy back to Damascus and down to his grave. If the unsaved ones in this congregation would heed the advice of their best and most unselfish friends, they would all be saved this very hour.

Let us follow Naaman and his company down to the Jordan. The road was twenty miles long. It was up and down, through valleys and around hills. The general had plenty of time to change his mind before he reached his destination. But the old soldier had a mind which was not easily changed. By and by, from the top of the last hill, he saw the Jordan tumbling through the valley. It did not compare in beauty to the Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus. And yet it was destined to be a thousand times dearer to him than either of them. Soon he stood on the sandy margin of the stream. Unbelief may have whispered in his ear: "Do not wash in this river. It can not possibly do you any good." The answer of his heart was: "I will wash. I believe the words of Jehovah's prophet that I shall be healed." He laid off his robes and his armor, and gave them into the hands of servants. With bare feet he waded out into the river, probably at the very place which, nine centuries and a quarter later, the world's Redeemer was baptized. He plunged beneath the surface. Reappearing, he shook the water from his head and limbs. No change. The leprosy was as bad as ever. A second plunge. No change! No healing! A third plunge, a fourth, a fifth, a sixth! No change! What did unbelief say then? What did faith say? The seventh plunge! Instantly he felt that he was healed. Rising, he shook the water—from his hair this time. He looked at himself. The scabs and scales and ulcers were all

gone. His flesh was as clean and soft and fair and white and ruddy as the flesh of a little child. His voice came back; and I can not help believing that the old soldier, who had shouted "victory" on a hundred battle-fields, made the hills of Israel ring with shouts of praise and joyful adoration.

That river represents the healing streams which flow from our Savior's pierced hands and feet and side. O sinner, if you will but plunge into the crimson river of salvation, you will lose all the leprosy of sin, and come out as innocent as a new-born child. The plunge that saves is faith. Naaman plunged and plunged, till the perfect number seven was reached. You must believe in Christ, and keep on believing till you know you are saved.

IV.

THE CRUCIFIXION.

"And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, . . . they crucified him."—MATTHEW XXVII, 33, 35.

BETWEEN the hours of eight and nine, on Friday morning, Jesus was led from Gabbatha to Golgotha. The word Gabbatha means a "pavement." It was the Mosaic or tessellated floor on which the chair of a Roman judge was placed. Seated in his chair on Gabbatha, in the old palace of Herod on Mount Zion, in Jerusalem, Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, pronounced sentence of death against the eternal Son of God.

Golgotha is a Hebrew word, which means a skull. The Greek equivalent is Kranion; the Latin is Calvary. It was the name of a little hill, just outside the walls of Jerusalem, so called because of its supposed resemblance in shape to a human head, or because it was strewed with the skulls of criminals who had been executed on the spot.

Jesus was led forth from Gabbatha, surrounded by a company of Roman soldiers, commanded by a centurion. On the way they halted in front of a prison, from which two condemned robbers were draged forth to die with the Nazarene. A little further on, three crosses and three boards were produced. The crosses were made each of two sticks of timber framed together. The boards were white, with black letters,

telling a culprit's name and crime. On the shoulders of each man a cross was placed, and a board was suspended over his breast by means of a cord around his neck.

Look at that mournful procession as it moves along! First we see a squad of soldiers. Then come the condemned, with two soldiers on either side of each. Behind these march the rest of the military detachment. Look at the soldiers! They wear iron breast-plates and helmets, and shields of brass, and carry long spears in their hands, and short, stout swords at their sides. They manifest no more pity for the condemned than do the paving stones on which they tread. See the robbers! They are brutal-looking wretches, who seem to have pursued a long course of crime and bloodshed. Behold Jesus! He can hardly move under his heavy load. He staggers as though he would fall. His garments are torn and stained with blood. His feet are bare, and leave bloody splashes on the stones. A crown of thorns has been pushed hard down upon his head, making deep wounds, from which ooze drops of blood which trickle down his face and neck. His cheeks are bruised and bleeding. His hair and beard are streaked with spittle, and matted with blood and dirt. His face is pale and sorrowful, but calm and sweet. No sound escapes his lips, either of anger or complaint.

Behind the soldiers, and pressing up on either side, so as to get a look or hurl an insult at Jesus, is an immense crowd of people. The millions of Jerusalem's citizens and Passover visitors seem to be in the streets. There are the priests and Levites, with the high priest at their head, gloating with fiendish glee over the downfall and shame of their hated rival. There are

the members of the Sanhedrin, who condemned him to death, but had not the power to execute their sentence. They laugh for joy to see the Nazarene in the hands of Roman executioners. There few Jews who hold no office—Jews from Judea, Jews from Antioch, Jews from Alexandria, Jews from Rome, Jews from Spain, Jews from Britain, Jews from the ends of the earth. The whole Jewish race has risen up to bathe its hands in the blood of the Lamb of God. There is the city mob, boiling and raging like a stormy sea casting up mire and dirt. There are servants and camel-drivers and market-men and menials and thieves and gamblers and cut-throats and every shade of poverty, ignorance, fanaticism, brutality, and vice. That countless multitude seems to have one huge abysmal throat, like the throat of some enormous wild beast, and through its open jaws it hoots and bellows and yells and hisses and screams: "Away with this King of the Jews! Death to the defiler of the Temple! Kill the blasphemer of God! Crucify him! crucify him!"

Jesus is alone. Here and there in the skirts of the throng is a man or woman who feels, but dares not express, sympathy for his anguish and shame. He who used to minister consolation to every form and degree of sorrow, has no one to wipe the sweat from his brow or whisper words of pity in his ear. The Son of God must suffer alone for the sins of the world.

Suddenly the procession stops. The soldiers face about, and press the crowd back with their leveled spears. The Nazarene has fallen. For twelve hours he has not had a wink of sleep, a morsel of food, or a moment of rest. He has been dragged about the streets, abused by the rabble, mocked by the soldiers, and has just undergone the hideous torture of the

scourge. Exhausted nature gives way, and he sinks fainting to the ground.

No one of the soldiers will carry the polluted cross. Jesus can not bear the heavy weight. What shall be done? They see a man named Simon, coming in from the country, a friend of the condemned. Commanded by the soldiers, he picks up the fallen cross, and bears it after Jesus. Behold the picture: Simon the Cyrenian bearing the cross on which the world's Redeemer is to die! The multitude deems him disgraced. But to me his seems the highest honor ever conferred on mortal man. To bear the cross after Jesus is a greater honor than to wear the crown of the mightiest empire on the globe.

From Gabbatha to Golgotha, so far as we know, Jesus spoke but once. On the road-side he saw a group of women, who were filling the air with loud lamentations and wailings. Touched with their expressions of sympathy, he said: "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold the days are coming in the which they shall say, Blessed are the childless. For if they do these things in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?"

Soon the ghastly hill of Golgotha was reached. The crosses were flung upon the ground near three holes, which had been dug to receive the bases. The soldiers cleared a circle around them with their spears, and preparations were at once made for the execution of the condemned. Let us fasten our mental vision on those crosses, and try to think what crucifixion must have been.

Crucifixion was the most diabolical invention of

a dark and bloody age. Compared with crucifixion, death by hanging, or beheading, or poisoning, would be almost a positive pleasure; while to be roasted at the stake would be a milder and more merciful punishment. Crucifixion was of Eastern origin. It was invented by a woman—Semiramis, queen of Nineveh. The Assyrians practiced it centuries before the beginning of our era. From them it spread to the Persians, Egyptians, Carthaginians, Greeks, and Romans. Alexander the Great borrowed it of the Phœnicians, and practiced it upon two thousand of their citizens whom he captured in the siege and fall of Tyre. Crassus introduced it to the Romans by lining the road from Rome to Capua, a distance of one hundred and twenty-five miles, with crucified slaves captured in a servile insurrection. The Emperor Augustus made it a legal mode of execution, by crucifying six thousand prisoners of the serf class taken in one of the civil wars. It was never a Jewish punishment. The mild and merciful religion of Jesus has made such cruelty impossible among civilized nations. But it was in perfect keeping with the fiendish cruelty and brutal taste of the old Romans. And yet they set it apart for the worst criminals, highway robbers, pirates, rebels, and slaves who had committed shameful crimes.

The victim of this hellish torture, having been scourged till covered with blood, was stripped and nailed to the cross, and lifted up between the earth and heaven, to die by inches. Usually death did not come till several days had passed. Criminals have been known to drag out more than a week of unspeakable agony on the cross.

Death by crucifixion seems to have contained in

itself everything which is ghastly and horrible in every other form of death. The unnatural position made the slightest movement perfect torture. The lacerated nerves and muscles throbbed with fiery agony. The wounds, undressed and irritated by the cruel nails, became inflamed and corrupt. The arteries and veins, swollen and surcharged with blood, were turned into avenues, along which the galloping coursers of unutterable pain flew back and forth between the heart and the extremities. Above all these were added the pangs of burning fever and raging thirst. Together, these horrors made death, usually so dreadful to human kind, seem the sweetest of pleasures. The criminal, utterly wretched, compelled to endure an anguish too awful for man to bear, conscious to the last, would entreat the spectators and executioners, with heart-rending cries, to put an end to his misery by bestowing the priceless boon of death.

To such a shameful and excruciating punishment our blessed Redeemer submitted himself, for your sake and for mine. In the eyes of that vast concourse of people, the brutal and blasphemous executioners stripped off his garments, leaving but a cloth around the loins. Then they threw him upon the cross on his back, and stretched out his arms along the transverse beam. Then they drove a large spike through each palm, deep into the wood. Next they drew up the legs till the soles of the feet lay flat on the upright beam, one above the other, and one long spike was driven through them both. Last of all, the cross, with its writhing burden, was lifted from the earth, and its base rudely dropped into a deep hole with an awful thud, which brought the entire weight of the body upon the nails, tearing the tender hands and feet, and

sending a thrill of extremest agony through every limb and nerve.

It was at this point that the Savior uttered the first of his eight recorded sentences on the cross. What did he say? What would you expect him to say at such a time, and in the hearing of such an assembly? Did he pour out curses and maledictions on his enemies, the authors of his cruel pains? Did he consign the infamous Pilate and the more infamous Caiaphas to the hell where they deserved to go? Did he utter a cry of agony, or a prayer for relief? No! No such words escaped his blessed lips. He prayed for his enemies. He lifted his eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." At the instant of his keenest suffering, he prayed for the soldiers, who drove the nails; for Pilate, who signed his death-warrant; for the priests and Pharisees, who hounded Pilate on to the commission of a crime from which—heathen though he was—he shrunk; for Jerusalem, whose millions so eagerly thirsted for his blood. Who but a God could forgive like that?

One slight mitigation was granted to the sufferings of the victim of the cross. A cup of wine, mingled with some stupefying drug, was presented to the lips of the condemned, to blunt the sharp edge of his pain. This Jesus refused. He would have nothing to cloud his mental vision. He would look the King of Terrors straight in the face, and suffer for us all that the cross could inflict.

Meanwhile the thieves had received their crucifixion, and the holiest Man who ever lived "was numbered with the transgressors," as God had said he would be seven hundred years before.

The next act in that bloody drama was the affixing

of the title above the sufferer's head. This was done, and the multitudes mockingly read: "This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews."

When we are in severe pain, it is a great relief and consolation to have some friend to stand by our side, to wipe the sweat from our brow, and breathe words of love and sympathy in our ear. This was denied the Son of God. He could see no friendly human face. No angel was permitted to come to his help. All about him were his enemies, breathing out scorn and hatred. They said everything that Satanic malice could invent to wound his feelings and to aggravate his pains. The rulers and the rabble cried: "He saved others; let him save himself, if he be the Christ." The soldiers offered him their sour wine, in mockery of his kingship, saying: "Ha, ha! save thyself if thou be the King of the Jews!" The chief priests, with the high priest at their head, had sunk so low that they could taunt their fallen foe, and shout with devilish glee: "He saved others; himself he can not save. Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said I am the Son of God." Others, still, wagged their heads, and said: "Ah! thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself! If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross."

Community of suffering generally makes friends of strangers and even of enemies. We might therefore expect that the thieves would show some sympathy for the innocent companion of their pains. But even they hurled insults at his head. They repeated the revilings of the mob, and add these bitter words: "If thou be the Christ, save thyself and us."

With what tenderness and affection we take in our hands the garments of our departed friends! How carefully we preserve the precious relics of those whom we love! With what pains the dying sometimes divide their ornaments and clothing among those who will survive their departure into the land of shadows! What was done with the garments of Jesus? Were they divided among the twelve apostles? Were they given as mementoes of love to the family at Bethany? Were they sent, with words of tenderness and sympathy, to the mother of the dying man? No. I am almost ashamed that I belong to the human family when I answer your question concerning the disposition of the raiment of our blessed Redeemer. Those blood-smeared villains, who had driven the nails through the sacred Sufferer's hands and feet, sat down under the shadow of his cross and gambled for his clothes. The outer robe they ripped up into four pieces, and each man took one. But the inner garment, which, like the robes of the priests, was woven without seam, became the property of him who beat his fellows in a game of dice. Thus the devil, the father of all gamblers, sought to add bitterness to the Savior's cup. But unwittingly he fulfilled a prophecy more than a thousand years old: "They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots."

Meanwhile the fierce rays of an almost tropical sun beat down upon the crosses, increasing the fever of the inflamed wounds, and enkindling the tortures of a raging thirst. But no word of complaint escaped the Sufferer's lips. With the most sublime heroism and patience he drained to the dregs the cup which our sins pressed to his mouth.

As the day advanced, the Jews grew tired of their

mockery and derision, and began to stream back into the city. Then some of the Nazarene's friends dared to draw near the cross. They were John, his beloved apostle, and Mary his mother, and Mary his aunt, and Mary of Magdala. Of all the world, these four were the only ones who had courage to show pity to the crucified Redeemer—a John and three Marys. O, how those names, John and Mary, were honored that hour! If your parents gave you one of those names, you ought to consider yourself highly honored; and feel bound, by your name, to stand as close to the cross as you can. Do not disgrace your name by being anything less than a whole-hearted disciple of your crucified Master. Jesus saw and recognized his friends. But he did not ask help or comfort from them. He seemed to forget himself in his solicitude for their welfare and comfort. Fastening his drooping eyes on his mother, and then on his disciple, he said: "Woman, behold thy son!" and "Behold thy mother!" The words were understood; and from that time forth, John was a dutiful son to Mary, and she was a mother to him.

Jesus was nailed to the cross at nine o'clock in the morning. At noon, a supernatural and awful darkness gathered over Golgotha and Jerusalem and the surrounding country. It seemd as though nature sympathized with her suffering Lord and Creator, and the sun refused to behold the death of the Light of the world. The darkness lasted till three o'clock.

As the end drew near, one of the thieves, writhing on the nails, twisted himself around toward the middle cross, and began again to curse the Nazarene. The other, who, hours before, had helped him curse, now rebuked him, in the name of God, and confessed the

justice of their punishment. Then turning his dying eyes toward the Savior, he prayed: "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." The prayer was very short; but into it the dying man put all his soul and all his trust. Jesus heard. The Great High Priest knew the penitent's heart, and instantly granted the absolution which he sought: "Verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." The cross had won its first trophy; and the agonizing Redeemer rejoiced over the first-fruits of a mighty harvest, which the on-coming ages would yield to the labors of his soul. That moment he began to "see of the travail of his soul" and to be satisfied.

Christ's sufferings on the cross were not merely physical. He did not suffer just as an ordinary man would in his place. He suffered more than the thieves. They suffered, each for himself. Jesus suffered for every human being who had ever lived, or ever should live. He suffered all through the years which preceded his death. The cross was only the climax of a long martyrdom. Just what his sufferings were we can not understand. But the Book says: "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." He bore the weight of the accumulated guilt of the human race. All the sins and crimes and shames and abominations which the human family had committed since Eve looked at the forbidden fruit, and all which should be committed down to the end of time, were heaped together and piled up on Jesus' crushed and bleeding heart. In that mountain-like mass were your sins and mine. On the cross his pains were as though this great, round world, eight thousand miles in diameter, and twenty-five thousand miles in circumference, had been hung to his hands, pulling the lacerated nerves

down upon the rugged nails. We can hardly begin to imagine what he suffered. But the bitterest part of his bitter cup was yet to be drank. Hitherto his Father's presence had been with him every moment. No cloud had ever come between him and Heaven. In all his weariness and persecution and rejection and derision and mental and physical anguish, his human soul had felt the rich joy of communion with God. Even in Gethsemane, when he almost died of sorrow, the Father was with the Son. But now the Father's presence must be withdrawn. The Redeemer must taste the pains of hell. He takes the sinner's place. Therefore he must suffer as the sinner would, cut off from God and banished to dark despair. And so the Father turned away his face. Abandoned by his friends, abandoned by the world, he was now abandoned by his God. Such agony then was his as the universe had never known, and never can know again. It was worse, by far, than hell. The agony of hell is the agony of a sinful soul cast off from a God who is not loved. The agony of Jesus was the agony of a holy soul utterly deserted by a God who was perfectly adored. This subject is too deep for us. We must check our words, and only think. We must keep ourselves to the inspired account. Suddenly an awful cry of anguish burst from the Savior's lips: "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani—My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" The next instant he spoke the only word of physical suffering which his long tortures were able to extort: "I thirst!" Some one among the spectators, who had a spark of mercy in his soul, ran, and, dipping a sponge in a vessel of sour wine which the soldiers had, raised it to his mouth on the end of a reed. The rest, misunderstanding his words, cried,

"Let him alone, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down!"

In a moment more, all was over. The light of his Father's face returned. With a loud voice, as if uttering a shout of victory which should resound through all the succeeding ages, he cried: "It is finished!" Then more gently he added: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." Then a shudder passed through his frame. His head sunk upon his breast, and he was dead. The great scheme of redemption was fully accomplished. The old dispensation was ended; the new was begun. The dividing wall between Jew and Gentile was broken down. The Aaronic priesthood was abolished. Henceforth every member of the human family could come for himself into the immediate presence of God.

That moment the priest, who had gone into the holy place in the temple to burn the incense of the evening sacrifice on the golden altar, witnessed a startling sight. Before him hung the great veil of purple and gold, dividing the holy from the most holy place, sixty feet high and thirty long. Instantly it was split in two, from the top to the bottom. Without, still more awful things were seen. A mighty earthquake shook the ground. The rocks around Golgotha were rent and split into yawning chasms. Many graves were opened. The bodies of many dead saints were cast forth in the sight of the frightened people, who, three days after, recognized them walking the streets of the sacred city. All who saw these exhibitions of Divine power were greatly moved. The soldiers about the cross were filled with fear. The iron-faced centurion cried out: "Certainly this was a righteous man! This was the Son of God!" The people

who had been looking on to see the Nazarene die, were sobered by the earthquake, and returned to the city conscience-stricken, wailing and beating their breasts. Perhaps they began to see that they had insulted and murdered the Son of God, the Hope of Israel.

Jesus was dead. What, in the purpose of God, was to be done with his corpse? According to Roman law the bodies of the crucified were left to rot on the cross, or to be devoured by vultures and crows. That could not be the case with the body of Jesus; for prophecy had said that he should make his grave with the rich, and the Jewish law forbade that the dead body of a criminal should hang over night. The priests forgot the prophecy, but remembered the law. Those strange men, who had not shrunk from bathing their hands in the blood of the immaculate Son of God, were so conscientious that they could not let the corpse of their murdered victim stay above ground over night, lest the holy city and temple should be defiled. So they went to Pilate, and begged him to have the three bodies removed. He ordered the soldiers to do as the Jews desired. Finding the thieves alive, they hastened their death by breaking their legs with an iron mallet. When they came to Jesus they found him already dead. So they did not break his legs, thus fulfilling a prophecy fifteen hundred years old: "A bone of him shall not be broken." But one of the soldiers, to make assurance doubly sure, raised his spear and drove the broad head deep into the Savior's side. Immediately two streams gushed forth from the wound—one of blood, the other of water; and that heathen spearman fulfilled another of the sayings of God: "They shall look on him whom they pierced."

Many have asked what was the immediate cause of Jesus' death. That a man, in the prime of life and in perfect health, should die when he had hung on the cross but six hours was an unheard-of thing. Pilate could not believe that he was dead. It is certain that the mere crucifixion did not kill him. The mingled flow of blood and water seems to solve the mystery. The solution is this: Around the heart is a sack, called the pericardium. When, from any cause, the heart is ruptured, the blood, flowing out into the pericardium, is separated into two fluids—a colorless fluid like water, and a deep red fluid like blood itself. The extreme mental angony which the Savior suffered ruptured the heart, and caused the blood to flow into the surounding sack. Thence the two fluids escaped through the wound made by the spear. This is the opinion of many eminent scientists. So Jesus, literally, died of a broken heart!

Here is a thought for you, dear friend: Your sins and mine broke our Savior's heart. Let us loathe our sins, which caused such grief. Let us turn our eyes, bathed in penitential tears, to Jesus hanging on the cross, and pray:

> "Let the water and the blood,
> From thy wounded side which flowed,
> Be of sin the double cure,
> Save from wrath and make *me* pure."

Meanwhile many loving hearts and willing hands had gathered around the cross. Among them was a wealthy and honorable counselor, named Joseph, of Arimathea, who carried a permit from Pilate to remove the body of Jesus. Nicodemus also was present; and we know not how many more. Tenderly, lovingly,

they took down the cross, and drew out the nails, and composed the wrenched limbs, and closed the gaping wounds, and washed away the blood, and wrapped the precious body in a new linen cloth with a hundred pounds of spices and drugs. Where should it be buried? Near Golgotha was a garden, the property of Joseph. In the garden was a new tomb, which had been hewn out in the rock for the last resting-place of the owner himself, when God should call him away. There the bruised body of the Redeemer should lie. While the last rays of the sun were shining through the trees, Joseph's tomb received its precious treasure; and a huge stone was rolled against the entrance. The men departed. But the women could not leave the spot. In the gathering twilight, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joses sat as mourners before the tomb, and wept for him whom they deemed forever lost to Israel and to them. Slowly the great, full, Passover moon rose over Olivet, and looked into the garden. But the women and the moon were not long alone. Soon harsh voices and heavy steps and the clank of armor were heard, and the glint of torches was seen through the trees. The women fled in terror; and sixteen mail-clad legionaries, armed with swords and spears, stood before the tomb. They had been sent by Pilate, at the urgent request of the Jews, to guard the dead and prevent a counterfeit resurrection. Surely they would be enough to suppress the insurrection of a corpse. First, they sealed the stone with wax or clay, and stamped the yielding mass with the governor's signet ring. Then they posted themselves as sentinels, and prepared to pass the night. Jesus was dead and buried. Pilate was glad to be rid of a troublesome case. The priests and

Pharisees held jubilee over the fall of their hated rival. The rabble caroused with Barabbas, whom they had preferred to the Son of God. The disciples were plunged in dark despair. The devils were happy. Hell seemed to be victorious. Then angels rejoiced, because they knew that man was redeemed.

That was Friday night. Sunday morning two angels leaped from the throne of God into Joseph's garden. Instantly an earthquake shook the place, opening the tomb, and Jesus walked forth alive. He showed himself to his disciples ten times in the space of forty days, and then went to heaven in a cloud. There he stands to-day before the Father's throne, showing his wounded hands and feet and side, interceding for us.

> "Five bleeding wounds he bears,
> Received on Calvary;
> They pour effectual prayers,
> They strongly plead for me:
> 'Forgive him, O forgive,' they cry,
> 'Nor let that ransomed sinner die.'"

What does the crucifixion mean to you? It means eternal life, if you will believe. It means eternal death, if you will not believe. There were two parties in Jerusalem the day Jesus was crucified, and only two; there could not have been a third. In one party were the few friends who clung to Jesus, and the thief who died praying for mercy. In the other party were Judas, who sold his Master for thirty pieces of silver; and Caiaphas, who delivered him to the Romans; and the rabble, who spit in his face, and cried, "Crucify him! crucify him!" and Pilate, who signed his death-warrant; and the executioners, who drove

the nails; and the thief, who died blaspheming. There are two parties to-day; there can not be a third. In one party are those who now open their arms and hearts, and take Jesus in as their Redeemer, Savior, King. All others reject him, and spit in his face, and cry: "Away with him! crucify him! crucify him!" To which party do you belong? You think that, if you had been in Jerusalem that day, you would have stood by the side of Jesus in Pilate's judgment-hall; that you would have spoken in his defense; that you would have wiped the spittle from his face; that you would have walked with him to Golgotha. But you do not know yourself. That same evil heart of unbelief, which leads you to reject Christ in the midst of this gospel day, with the record of nineteen centuries of his wonder-working power before you, would have caused you to stand with Jerusalem's mob demanding the blood of the Son of God. This very moment you take Jesus to be your Savior from sin, or you are crucifying him afresh, and putting him to an open shame. Your heart either cries, "Bring forth the royal diadem, and crown him Lord of all," or "Away with him! away with him!" You are either his true disciple, or his murderer. Which is it? In the name of God, which *shall* it be?

V.

THE CLEANSING BLOOD.

"If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin."—1 JOHN 1, 7.

THERE are very few things which we, earth-born mortals, positively know. Probably that of which we can most confidently say, "I know," is the fact of our own existence. We know, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that we are. Next to our own existence, there is nothing more certain than the existence of sin in the world. We know that sin is, and that sin is in this world.

And yet there are persons so deluded, or so dishonest, as to say: "There is no such thing as sin." As well might a man traveling through an unbroken forest, in midnight darkness, say: "There are no trees on this continent." A man running his head against the trunk of a giant oak, with the words, "There are no such things as trees" on his tongue, is like a man traveling through this ruined world, saying to himself and to others: "There is no such thing as sin."

Sin surrounds us on all sides, as thick as trees in a primeval forest. We run against sin almost every time we move. Sin hurls us to the ground. Sin batters and bruises and blinds and mangles us. "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves;" and the wounds with which sin has covered us declare that "the truth is not in us." There are some who say

that wrong is right in disguise; that error is truth viewed from the opposite side; that vice is only another name for virtue; that sin and holiness are really one and the same. But we who believe the Bible, and all men whom Satan has not completely enslaved and befooled, know that there is a difference between sin and holiness as broad as eternity. Compared with each other, sin is a serpent, while holiness is a dove; sin is a devil, holiness is an angel; sin is darkness, holiness is light; sin is bitterness, holiness is sweetness; sin is disease, holiness is health; sin is pain, holiness is joy; sin is death, holiness is life; sin is the downward, holiness is the upward; sin is hell, holiness is heaven. When you have proved, beyond the possibility of a reasonable doubt, that there is no difference between a serpent and a dove, between a devil and an angel, between darkness and light, between bitterness and sweetness, between disease and health, between pain and joy, between death and life, between down and up, between hell and heaven, then you may undertake to make us believe that there is no difference between sin and holiness.

You run against sin almost every time you move. You have business relations with a neighbor. He makes a statement to you which he knows to be false, for the express purpose of deceiving and defrauding you. He lies to you. If lying is not a sin, telling the truth is not a virtue. Walking on the street, you see a drunken man reeling by, full of alcohol, but empty of wit and decency and manhood. If drunkenness is not a sin, temperance is not a virtue. Turning the corner, you hear a company of roughs firing off volleys of the most horrid oaths. If profanity is not a sin, prayer is not a virtue. Listening to the gossip of

the town, you hear that a man has absconded with another man's wife. If adultery is not a sin, chastity is not a virtue. Taking up a paper, you read how a man, coveting a lady's jewels, enters her house at night, and stabs her in her bed. If murder is not a sin, mercy is not a virtue. Opening a volume of history, you read the story of a battle, in which men, "made of one blood," the children of one Father, meet on a plain and fight with the fury of demons, till fifty thousand mangled corpses strew the ground, and the soil is literally soaked with blood. If war is not a sin, brotherly love is not a virtue. The world, for thousands of years, has been full of lying and drunkenness and profanity and adultery and murder and war and a thousand other kindred evils. Therefore we say the world is full of sin. Prove to us that these things do not exist, and we will believe that sin is not. Sin is a terrible fact. The world is darkened and stained and blighted and cursed and ruined by sin. Sin is the cause of all the world's disappointment and pain and shame and sorrow and degradation and death. Sin is God's enemy. Sin is the enemy of the human race. Sin is the only thing which can do you harm.

Do you ask what is sin? The word is used in two ways. Any voluntary violation of a known law of God is what the theologians call "*actual sin.*" That depraved state of the heart which results from actual sin, and out of which actual sin springs, is what they call "*original*" or "*inbred sin.*" What is sin? Sin is a viper, which fastens its fangs in the soul, and fills the immortal spirit with poison and death. What is sin? Sin is a serpent, which twists its slimy coil around the soul, and crushes out all its life. What is

sin? Sin is a whirlpool, which draws the soul out of the course to heaven, and plunges it down into the vortex of eternal perdition. What is sin? Sin is a loathsome and incurable disease, which turns all moral beauty into rottenness, and kills with everlasting torments. What is sin? Sin is a chain, which the sinner forges for himself link after link, toiling painfully all his days, that, at the last, he may be bound with it, and be cast into the prison-house of the damned. Sin is the sexton that digs graves for souls. Sin is the stoker that feeds and rakes the quenchless fires of the bottomless pit. Sin is a siren that lures men into her embrace, and then leaps with them into the fiery gulf.

Sin blights the fairest blossoms of youth. Sin breaks the hearts of parents, and brings their gray hairs with sorrow to the grave. Sin transforms gentle children into wolves, tender mothers into tigers, and loving fathers into the most cruel of monsters. Sin casts the apple of discord into peaceful homes. Sin kindles the torch of war, and shakes it over trembling cities and States. Sin turns the gentlest and softest hearts into granite and steel. Sin hurls reason from her throne, and drags down that being who was created in the image of God to the level of the swine and to the companionship of devils and fiends.

There are five great facts about sin which I wish to state, and which I ask you to remember. First: *Sin grows.* The first sin which the child commits may seem very small. The power of sin over the soul may be very slight at the beginning. But the first sin leads to a second greater than itself. The third is greater than the second. The fourth is greater than the third. So the awful series progresses till the sinner is capable

of the most monstrous crimes, and sin becomes a habit, binding brain and will and soul as with an adamantine chain. At the beginning sin is like the slender thread which the tiniest spider spins. At last it is like those huge cables with which the largest ships bind themselves to their anchors in the face of the howling storm. If you would not be bound in everlasting bonds of darkness and despair, do not let Satan twist the spider threads of little sins around your soul.

Second: *Sin deceives.* In the days when apostate Rome used to torment and murder the people of God, the Spanish inquisitors had in their underground prison an instrument of torture named the "Virgin." It was exceedingly beautiful to the sight. There stood the semblance of a beautiful woman, dressed in richest robes, with an inviting smile upon her face, waiting to receive with outstretched arms whomsoever should approach. The victim of persecuting hate was pushed forward to kiss the Virgin, when, suddenly, moved by some secret mechanism, the arms inclosed him in a deadly embrace, piercing him with a hundred hidden knives. Sin is like that image. Sin puts on a beautiful exterior, and smilingly invites us to take her arm and walk with her along the paths of worldly delight. But certain death awaits every one who kisses her treacherous lips.

Third: *Sin produces moral insanity.* The artist Hogarth once painted a picture like this: Here is a man in a cell, sitting on a heap of straw, chained like a wild beast to the wall. He smiles, sings, and laughs. He thinks that he is the monarch of a great empire. The dark and loathsome cell is his palace. The moldy straw is his throne. His tattered rags are a robe of the richest purple. The rough keepers, looking at him

through the grated window, are his obsequious courtiers. He himself is the greatest of kings, the happiest of mortals. That man is a lunatic. Though he deems himself most happy, he is an object of the deepest pity to every beholder. Yet he is no more insane than the man who, clothed in the rotten rags of sin, and bound, hand and foot, in Satan's prison-house, calls himself free, and laughs and sings and shouts, sitting on the thin crust of time which separates him from the flames of everlasting damnation.

Fourth: *Sin kills.* A single sin will kill. One little hole will sink the largest ship to the bottom of the sea. The stab of a pen-knife in the heart will kill the strongest man as surely as a ball from the largest cannon. One drop of some poisons will bring instant death to the most robust body. One sin, unforgiven, will kill the soul with eternal torments. Sin kills long after its commission. The sin which you commit to-day may sting your soul with the pangs of the second death a thousand ages hence. The wound inflicted by the teeth of a rabid dog may heal so perfectly as to be forgotten. Many months, or even years, may pass, and the man may look forward to a long life of health and security. But the virus still lurks in the system, and will most surely reappear in madness, agony, and a frightful death. Every sin which you have ever committed has left a drop of venom in your soul, whose certain issue will be eternal death.

Fifth: *Sin marks, disfigures, and pollutes the soul.* This is the thought which the text suggests. This is the thought upon which I wish to dwell this hour. Sin marks, disfigures, and pollutes the soul. Sin is the only thing which has this power. Poverty, slander,

persecution, and bereavement can not harm the soul—the real man. They only serve to polish and beautify his character. But the smallest sin which a man can commit will leave an ineffaceable trace upon the immortal spirit.

Sin marks the soul. Every sin makes its own mark, which neither time nor eternity can remove. An ingenious American has invented a machine which sews the soles upon boots and shoes almost with the rapidity of thought. The machine has an attachment which, by a combination of wheels and pointers, marks every stitch which the needle takes. At the end of many months the manufacturer of the machine, who receives a percentage upon all the work it performs, or his agent, comes and looks at the dial, and ascertains just what is his due, to the hundredth part of a penny. The owner of the shop can not cheat him out of the value of a single stitch, because the machine bears and reveals the marks of its own operations with absolute accuracy. Click, click, click, goes the machine, day after day and week after week, as fast as steam can drive the wheels, and the hand of the skillful operator can guide the work, till the storehouse is full of boxes of boots and shoes. If you should undertake to count the stitches, you would find the task too great for your patience or time. They run far up into the scores of millions. The operator has no idea of their number. But there on the dial, on the machine itself, a perfect record can be read. The machine is so constructed that it must mark every stitch which it makes, or make no stitches at all. The only way to destroy the marks is to destroy the machine.

Like that machine is the human soul. Every stitch which the machine makes represents a sin committed

by the deathless spirit. Every sinful act, word, and thought, leaves its mark on the soul. They accumulate with such rapidity that the man has no idea of their number. But the Infinite Creator and his agents, the angels, have only to look at the soul to tell how many sins the man has committed since his probation began. The soul is so constituted that it must mark every sin which it commits, or commit no sins at all. Outside of the gospel of Jesus Christ, there is no way in which the Almighty can remove from the soul the marks of sin but by annihilating the soul. The marks must remain as long as the soul continues to exist. At the judgment-day, God will read the record in the hearing of the universe, and then reward each man according to his works. What can wash away the marks of sin is a question of infinite importance to you and to me and to every human being.

Sin disfigures the soul. Every sinful act, word, and thought inflicts a blotch, a scar, a wound, upon the soul. A certain man had a son who was strongly inclined to the sin of anger. Many times every day he would lose his temper, and fly into a rage. His father gave him many reproofs, without effect. One day, seeing him in a furious passion, he went and brought a box of nails and a hammer, and gave them to him, saying: "My son, whenever you have fallen into the sin of anger, go and drive a nail into yonder post." The boy said he would, inwardly resolving that the nails driven should be very few. After the lapse of some weeks the father and the son met at the post. "See here," said the latter, "the top of the post is full of nails. What a sorry sight!" "Ah! my child," said the father, "that is the way your soul looks in the eyes of a holy God. Corresponding with each one of these

nails there is a wound in your deathless spirit." My friend, let this thought sink deep into your mind. Every time you perform a wicked act, every time you utter an unholy word, every time you harbor an impure desire, you drive a nail into your soul which will disfigure and torment for ever and ever. What can remove the stings and wounds of sin is the most important question which a man ever asked.

Sin pollutes the soul. Every sin which a man commits leaves a foul stain, which time only serves to render deeper and more enduring. In one of his immortal dramas, Shakespeare relates the killing of Duncan, king of Scotland, by Macbeth, one of his lords. Macbeth was ambitious to be king in Duncan's place. Duncan was Macbeth's guest. Urged on by his bolder and more ambitious wife, Macbeth stole into the king's chamber at night, and stabbed him in his bed. No sooner was the hellish deed performed than the wretched murderer began to feel the stings of remorse. Coming out of the death-chamber into the larger room where his Jezebel was waiting to know that the blow was struck that should make her queen, he showed her his hands covered with blood. "This is a sorry sight," he said. Her answer was: "Go, get some water, and wash this filthy witness from your hand." Then he said:

> "What hands are here! Ha! they pluck out mine eyes.
> Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
> Clean from my hand? No; this my hand will rather
> The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
> Making the green one red."

When Macbeth spoke these dreadful words, he did not really mean his hands. A little water would have washed them clean. He was looking

through his hands down into his soul. There he saw streaks of blood and clots of gore which could never be washed away. If every murderer and every fornicator and every rum-seller and every drunkard and every sinner could see his soul as God can see, it would look like Macbeth's bloodstained hands. Every sin, whether it be what men call great or small, is a drop of blood on the sinner's soul. Some souls are covered with putrid gore.

Imagine to yourself a palace hall. Its floor and walls and ceiling are snow-white marble polished to the highest perfection. Through windows of purest crystal the sun pours in a flood of splendor, making the place seem like the throne-room of the King of kings. That marble hall represents, to my mind, the heart of a little child. Children come into the world, I admit, with sinful tendencies. But as to actual transgressions, they are as spotless as the sons of light who stand around the celestial throne. That marble hall represents your soul, as it was when you came into this world out of the hands of God. But at the moment when accountability begins, the will throws open the palace-door to a crowd of demons fresh from the infernal realm. In they come and march around the hall. Each one carries in his hand a bottle filled with a liquid invented and made by the prince of devils. As they march around the room, they hurl their bottles at the walls, and cover them with splashes black as ink. When they go out, other demons come in, and continue the work, till the beauty of the palace is completely spoiled. Those demons represent the sins which men commit. The splashes represent the stains of sin upon the soul. Every sin which you have ever com-

mitted has left a black and damning splash upon your soul. If you could look down into your heart, it would present the appearance of that marble hall, once so beautiful, covered with blackness and defilement. What can wash away the stains of sin is the question of questions to us and to all mankind.

Shall I tell you what can not cleanse the soul from sin? *Tears* can not. If your head were waters and your eyes a fountain of tears, so that you might weep day and night over your sins, not one of the dismal stains would disappear. Could your tears forever flow, could your zeal no languor know, these for sin could not atone. If you could weep a thousand years, you would be no nearer God and salvation at the end of that period than at the beginning.

The waters of baptism will not wash away sin. It seems unnecessary to make that assertion, the truth it presents is so self-evident to every thoughtful mind. And yet there have been millions who have believed in baptismal regeneration. There are many who hold to the same senseless creed to-day. They say to themselves: "If a regularly ordained minister of Jesus Christ sprinkles, or pours, water upon my head in the name of the Holy Trinity, or dips my body beneath the flood, my sins will vanish, and I shall be clean in the sight of God." That opinion is the very depth of stupidity and folly. Water can cleanse the body; it can not reach the soul. Water applied as a religious rite is a beautiful symbol of the cleansing power of God previously bestowed. It has no cleansing power in itself. If you should make a pilgrimage to the sacred Jordan, and one of the apostles should rise from the dead, and dip you beneath its waves at the

very spot where the Son of God was baptized by the hands of John, you would come up out of the water as vile and sinful as when you went in.

The whitewash of outward morality will not take away sin. Whitewash, at the best, only hides, it never removes impurity. External righteousness can not change the heart. If that boy had whitewashed the post into which he had driven the nails, would the whitewash have extracted the nails? If the owner of that marble hall should whitewash its ink-smeared walls, would he thus remove the stains? The world is full of whitewashed sinners. Jesus met many of them when he was on earth. They were called Pharisees then. The Great Teacher once said to them: "Woe unto you Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchers, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity."

The fires of hell can not cleanse away sin. It was a notion of the ancient Greeks, and of other heathen nations, that the sins clinging to souls after death would be burned out in the flames of a subterranean lake. The Roman Catholic Church stole that notion from paganism, and put it into her creed; and wherever there is a Romish priest, he tells his deluded followers that purgatorial fires will complete the work of Churchly sacraments, and fit their disembodied spirits for the joys of heaven. In their estimation, fire is the great purifying agent in the economy of God. There are some who profess great wisdom, and affect to despise the superstitious papists, who nevertheless hold to this same doctrine of salvation by fire. They de-

clare, with the utmost assurance, that every man must suffer for his own sins; that every soul that passes into eternity with the stains of sin upon it must suffer till those stains are gone; and that then he will be permitted, being saved by fire, to enter the abode of the Celestial King. Neither the pains of earth nor hell can remove the defilement of sin. They rather serve to burn sin into the soul in deeper and more indelible colors.

What will cleanse the soul from sin? The text answers that question. The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth from all sin. There is nothing but the blood of Jesus, in earth or heaven, which possesses the slightest power to take away moral impurity. There is only one fountain for cleansing in the universe. That fountain has been opened to the inhabitants of the whole earth. It is "filled with blood drawn from Immanuel's veins."

The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from *sin.* A pious woman took to her home, to rear and educate, a little Irish boy who was deaf and dumb. She set herself at work at once to teach him about God and sin, and Christ and redemption. The task was extremely difficult, from the fact he could neither hear her voice nor question her with his own. But patient, prayerful labor, under the blessing of heaven, bore sweet fruit. "The true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" shone into the boy's darkened mind. He came to know God, and experienced the power of saving grace. He also learned to converse by signs and by writing, and became a very interesting and instructive companion to the kind lady, who had adopted him as her child. One day he gave her his idea of the judgment, and how those would

escape condemnation who had faith in Jesus Christ. His words were very nearly these: "When I have lain a long time in the grave, God will come and call very loud, 'Jack!' I shall start up, and say, 'Yes, here is Jack.' Then I shall see multitudes standing together, and God sitting on a cloud with a large book in his hand. He will beckon me to stand before him, while he opens the book, and looks at the top of the pages till he comes to the name John B. On that page, God has written all my sins, and the page was full. So God will look and strive to read it, and hold it up to the sun for light; but there will be nothing there." The lady asked him in much alarm if he had done no wrong. "Yes, yes," he answered, "I have committed many sins. But when I first prayed to Jesus Christ, he took the book out of God's hand, and pulling from his palm something which filled up the hole made by the nail, he allowed the wound to bleed a little, and then passed his hand down the page, so that God could see none of Jack's sins, only Jesus' blood. Nothing being found against me, God will shut the book, and I shall remain standing before him till the Lord Jesus comes, and, saying to God, 'My Jack,' draws me aside and bids me stand with the angels till the rest are judged." That little boy's sublime idea of the Red Hand was ever before him.

That is the way to be cleansed from sin. The hand of Jesus, covered with his own precious blood, must be passed over the dark record of our sinful life, and over the darker stains of our sinful hearts, and then both the record and the soul will be washed "whiter than snow."

The blood of Jesus Christ is able to cleanse *all*

sinners from sin. Think of the innumerable stars. Multiply their actual millions by as many millions more. Imagine them to have been densely populated for countless ages by generations of fallen beings. There are no figures adequate to the task of representing the acts of sin of those separate souls. But we are sure of this, that the blood of Jesus would be more than sufficient to cleanse all those fallen creatures, and to absolve every sinner from his unnumbered sins.

The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from the *greatest sins.* We are informed that there is no power in chemistry that can bleach scarlet and crimson rags so that they can be made into white paper. Hence these are usually made into red blotting-paper. There are some sinners like that—scarlet sinners, crimson sinners. They have been steeped in inquity even from their childhood. What can God do with such sinners? Hear his own blessed words: "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." There is no sin so deep, so red, so damning, but the blood of Christ can wash it as white as snow.

The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from *all* sin. This story is related of Martin Luther, the great reformer: One night Satan, the king of hell, appeared to enter Luther's room, and with an air of insolent triumph displayed a huge roll of parchment which he carried in his arms. "What is that?" said Luther. "It is a catalogue of all your sins," replied the fiend. The reformer leaped from his bed in mortal terror and agony. With a burst of derisive laughter the devil threw the roll on the floor, and, holding one end in

his hand, began to unroll its awful length. The frightened man was compelled to read, hour after hour, the damning list of all the sins he had committed in all the years of his life. He groaned with agony as he discovered every now and then some vile act or word which he had forgotten. They were all there. How black the ink in which they were written! How long the parchment roll! How tightly the gleeful devil held it in his scaly fingers! He knew that the record was correct. There his sins were just as God would one day set them before him in the light of a burning world. His heart sank within him as he gazed, and he bowed his head in sorrow, shame, and despair.

Suddenly, Satan called him by name, and pointed to some words along the top of the roll just where it was held in his hand. Luther looked and read: "All sin." Then he understood that no one of his many acts, or even thoughts, was to be left out. All his life was sin. He began to shiver. His agony grew most intense. Hell seemed to yawn under his feet. Satan kept screaming, "All sin! all sin!" Then he added: "So says God, so says God, all sin! all sin!"

Luther knew something of the Word of God. A flash of defiance came into his face. "Where speaks God that word?" he cried. He sprang from his bed. "In what chapter and verse does God say that?" he thundered. "There! there!" answered the devil, "all sin! all sin!" The reformer sprang forward and snatched the awful list from the tempter's hand, and unrolling it one turn more, discovered the remainder of the inscription. There was the whole sentence as in the Bible: "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin!" So he understood that the

reason why all his sins had been massed together upon that roll was to assure him that they were completely covered by the atonement of the Son of God. With a glad cry of exultation and joy he awoke, and the devil and the roll were gone.

Have you been cleansed from all your sins in the blood of the Son of God? There is a clime where you desire to dwell. There is a company of shining ones whom you desire to join. John saw that shining band when he was on Patmos. "They are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." "Who are these arrayed in white, and whence came they?" was the question in the Revelator's mind. Here is the answer: "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have *washed* their robes and made them *white* in the *blood of the Lamb.*" You must be washed, like them, in the blood of the Lamb, or never stand with them on the sea of glass.

One question more must be briefly answered: How am I to secure the application of Christ's all-cleansing blood? The text gives an easy answer, "Walk in the light!" God has given light to every child of Adam. No man is in darkness, unless he has willfully plunged into the shadow of sin. Come into all the light which God has thrown upon your pathway. Walk in that light. Seek more light. Do not try to

hide your sins. Bring them out into the light. Walk in the light by faith. And soon you will come to the fountain which is filled with blood. Then, washing, you can sing:

> "Jesus, thy blood and righteousness
> My beauty are, my glorious dress;
> 'Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed,
> With joy shall I lift up my head."

VI.

THE SECOND BLESSING.

"And he cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him. And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw aught. And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees walking. After that he put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly."—MARK VIII, 22–25.

EVERY thoughful person who hears or reads these words must ask: "Why did not Jesus do a perfect work on that blind man in the first act? Why were there two steps in the process by which his sight was fully restored?" Other answers may be given, but I think *the* reason was that the Great Teacher wished to teach by the best method, the "object method," the great lesson that in the normal Christian experience there are two distinct stages, two separate degrees, two great crises, two definite blessings. When God undertakes to save a soul, and is permitted to have his way, he performs in that soul two great works, never to be performed again; he bestows two great blessings, never to be bestowed again. There is a first blessing; and there is, just as distinctly, a *second* blessing. The first blessing is what we usually call conversion—that is, justification and regeneration. After conversion there is a second blessing. "But," you say, "since my conversion I have received a hundred

blessings." I have the advantage of you; I have had a thousand blessings since my conversion. But there is a definite second blessing, unlike all other blessings. After a man has been instantaneously converted, by the power of the Holy Ghost through faith, it is God's will that he shall undergo a second instantaneous transformation, through the same power and on the same condition. By two definite and distinct acts, and only two, God gives perfect sight to the soul that was born in the darkness of sin.

Why do we believe in the doctrine of the second blessing? First, because it is, and always has been, held by the Methodist Church. In doctrine, Methodism, throughout the generations and the continents, is one. The great Methodist tree, under which so many millions rejoice to sit and eat its fruit, has many branches. Without making a careful count, I can name sixteen. They differ only in Church government. They do not differ at all in the doctrines which they profess to hold and teach. There have been many splits from the original Methodist stock, in this country and in Great Britain; but there has never been the slightest split in doctrine. Go where you will, among Methodists, and they believe the same things.

Now universal Methodism holds to the doctrine of the second blessing. I do not say that every member of the Methodist Church does; but every Methodist Church has it imbedded in her creed and standards of faith. John Wesley, our founder, and his associates, believed in the second blessing. Everywhere he went he taught the doctrine, and urged the experience upon his followers. December 28, 1770, he wrote thus to Joseph Benson: "With all zeal and diligence confirm the brethren, first, in holding fast that whereto

they have attained—namely, the remission of all their sins by faith in a bleeding Lord; second, in expecting a *second change*, whereby they shall be saved from all sin, and perfected in love." October 8, 1774, he wrote to a Miss Hilton, of Beverly: "It is exceeding certain God did give you the *second blessing*, properly so called. He delivered you from the root of bitterness, from inbred, as well as actual sin." January 19, 1782, he wrote to a friend: "Entire salvation from inbred sin can hardly ever be insisted upon, either in preaching or prayer, without a particular blessing. Honest Isaac Brown firmly believes this doctrine, that we are to be saved from all sin in this life. But I wish, when opportunity serves, you would encourage him: 1. To preach Christian perfection constantly, strongly, and explicitly; 2. Explicitly to assert and prove that it may be received now; and 3. That it is to be received by simple faith." Only two years before his death he wrote: "This doctrine [the second blessing, Christian perfection] is the grand depositum which God has lodged with the people called Methodists, and for the sake of propogating this chiefly he appears to have raised us up."

I might fill this sermon, and a dozen more, with quotations to show that Wesley, and nearly all the great lights of early and later Methodism, firmly held and clearly taught the doctrine of the second blessing. Only last May, in their address to the General Conference, our sixteen bishops said: "As a Church we have taught from the beginning that believers have power to become the sons of God, be made partakers of the Divine nature." That is the first blessing. In the next sentence they say: "We have insisted on the glorious privilege and duty of

all men becoming saints, of immediately being made perfect in love, and of gradually ripening into Christian maturity in all faculties." "Immediately being made perfect in love"—what is that but the second blessing?

Every Methodist minister who belongs to an Annual Conference believes in the second blessing; at least, he is obliged to say that he does. When the candidate for full membership in the traveling connection stands before the president of the Conference, his brethren, and high heaven, a series of questions is propounded to him. The first is: "Have you faith in Christ?" That means, "Have you saving faith?" "Are you saved?" "Have you been converted?" "Have you experienced the first blessing?" The candidate is expected to answer, "Yes." If he should say "No," the ceremony, so far as he is concerned, would stop. We do not intend to receive any man into our minstry, no matter how gifted and learned, who has not had a supernatural birth into the family of God by the power of the Holy Ghost.

The second question is: "Are you going on to perfection?" That must be answered in the affirmative. We will have no man in our ministry who thinks he "got it all at conversion." No man can be a true Methodist preacher who holds that there is nothing after conversion but an indefinite growth in grace. He must believe in Christian perfection as an experience to be definitely attained; for the question does not say, "Are you going on *toward* perfection?"—like a boy chasing a rainbow; it says, "Are you going on *to* perfection?"—like a man journeying to a city which he expects to enter.

The third question is: "Do you expect to be made

perfect in love in this life?" That is the decisive question. The man who answers "Yes," says, in effect, "I believe in a second blessing, to be definitely sought and experienced after conversion and before death."

The fourth question is: "Are you earnestly striving after it?" The man who answers "Yes," does the same as to say, "I believe in the second blessing, and that it is God's will that I should have it now;" for no sane man would now be earnestly striving after anything which he did not believe he could now obtain.

Nothing could be clearer than that every itinerant Methodist preacher professes to believe the doctrine of the two blessings—*conversion* and PERFECT LOVE. What would you think of the man who is now addressing you, if, after answering these four questions "Yes," he should go through the Church crying out against the second blessing, and opposing and persecuting those who preach and profess it? Let John Wesley answer. In a letter to Dr. Adam Clarke, the great commentator, bearing date November 26, 1790, he says: "If we can prove that any of our preachers or leaders, either directly or indirectly, speak against *perfect love*, let him be a preacher or leader no longer. I doubt whether he should continue in the society, because he that could speak thus in our congregations can not be an honest man." If that seems severe, charge it not to me, but to the spiritual father of twenty-five million Methodist members and adherents scattered through the world.

The distinguishing doctrine of Methodism is the doctrine of the second blessing; and the special mission which God has given to Methodism is to teach that doctrine and experience. That is what Meth-

odism is for; and where that is not, Methodism is not. If you do not believe in the second blessing, you are not a genuine and thorough Methodist.

The second reason why we believe in the second blessing is, that it is taught in our hymn-book. That alone would not amount to anything; for the hymn-book is not inspired, as the Bible alone is. But it is a proof along with other stronger ones.

The 482d hymn in our Hymnal says:

"The thing my God doth hate,
That I no more may do,
Thy creature, Lord, *again* create,
And *all* my soul renew."

Notice, "Thy creature, Lord, *again* create." He created us in regeneration. Now we pray that he will create us again in entire sanctification, "And *all* my soul renew." The idea is that God partially renewed our soul in regeneration, and now we pray that he will finish the work and wholly renew us. The second stanza explains more fully what the second blessing is:

"My soul shall then, like thine,
Abhor the thing unclean,
And, sanctified by love divine,
Forever cease from sin."

The 486th hymn reads:

"Savior of the sin-sick soul,
Give me faith to make me whole;
Finish thy great work of grace;
Cut it short in righteousness."

"Finish thy great work of grace." God began his great work of cleansing in regeneration. Now the poet prays that he will bestow a second blessing

by finishing the cleansing, and do it instantly—"*Cut it short* in righteousness:"

"Speak the second time, 'Be clean!'
Take away my inbred sin;
Every stumbling-block remove;
Cast it out by perfect love."

At conversion, God said "Be clean," and the soul was partially cleansed. Now the prayer is that he will say "Be clean" once more, and end the cleansing work by taking away "inbred sin," and put "perfect love" in its place. The 491st hymn is very familiar and very precious:

"Love divine, all love excelling,
Joy of heaven, to earth come down!
Fix in us thy humble dwelling;
All thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, thou art all compassion,
Pure unbounded love thou art;
Visit us with thy salvation;
Enter every trembling heart."

There is nothing about the second blessing in that stanza. But listen to the second:

"Breathe, O breathe thy loving Spirit
Into every troubled breast!
Let us all in thee inherit,
Let us find that second rest.
Take away our bent to sinning;
Alpha and Omega be;
End of faith, as its beginning,
Set our hearts at liberty."

"*Second* rest." What does that mean? Do you believe in the second rest? If not, do not sing this hymn; or, as one of the denominations which rejects

the doctrine of full salvation has done, strike out the word *second*, and put some different term in its place. The first rest comes to the soul at conversion. It is a partial rest from sin. In the act of entire sanctification, God gives the "second rest" by taking away our natural "bent to sinning," in regard to which we often sing:

"Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
Prone to leave the God I love."

Christ was our Alpha in the first blessing—conversion. Here we pray that he will be our Omega in our entire sanctification—the second blessing. In the third stanza the great poet of Methodism most beautifully tells what the second blessing is:

"Come, almighty to deliver,
Let us all thy life receive;
Suddenly return, and never,
Never more thy temples leave:
Thee we would be always blessing,
Serve thee as thy hosts above,
Pray, and praise thee without ceasing,
Glory in thy perfect love."

The second blessing is the fullness of Christ's life—"Let us *all* thy life receive." It is received instantaneously, not by growing in grace—"*Suddenly* return." It is the abiding presence of the Comforter in the soul—"Never, never more thy temples leave." In the last stanza the poet continues to tell what the second blessing is, and contradicts the notion that it is the end of growth:

"Finish then thy new creation;
Pure and spotless let us be;
Let us see thy great salvation,
Perfectly restored in thee—

Changed from glory into glory,
Till in heaven we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before thee,
Lost in wonder, love, and praise."

The 513th hymn is a prayer that God's people, those who have experienced the first blessing, may obtain the second blessing:

"Lord, I believe a rest remains
To all thy people known;
A rest where pure enjoyment reigns,
And thou art loved alone:

A rest where all our soul's desire
Is fixed on things above;
Where fear, and sin, and grief expire,
Cast out by perfect love.

O that I now the rest might know,
Believe, and enter in!
Now, Savior, now the power bestow,
And let me cease from sin.

Remove this hardness from my heart;
This unbelief remove:
To me the rest of faith impart,
The Sabbath of thy love."

The 542d hymn is a most graphic description of a Christian longing and praying for the second blessing. That it is expected in this life is certain from this last stanza:

"O that I might at once go up."

He is not praying that he may cross the river of death, but the Jordan, which separates the wilderness of the merely regenerate state from the Canaan of perfect

love. I have not time for comment; I will merely read it:

"O glorious hope of perfect love!
It lifts me up to things above;
It bears on eagles' wings;
It gives my ravished soul a taste,
And makes me for some moments feast
With Jesus' priests and kings.

Rejoicing now in earnest hope,
I stand, and from the mountain top
See all the land below:
Rivers of milk and honey rise,
And all the fruits of paradise
In endless plenty grow.

A land of corn, and wine, and oil,
Favored with God's peculiar smile,
With every blessing blest;
There dwells the Lord our Righteousness,
And keeps his own in perfect peace,
And everlasting rest.

O that I might at once go up;
No more on this side Jordan stop,
But now the land possess;
This moment end my legal years,
Sorrows and sins, and doubts and fears,
A howling wilderness!"

The best part of our grand old Hymnal is a sealed book to those who reject the doctrine of the second blessing.

The third reason why we believe in the doctrine of the second blessing is, that it is taught in the experiences of many of the great men of the modern Church. We will listen to two testimonies—one from a Methodist, the other from a Presbyterian. Leonidas L. Hamline was one of the greatest men whom Meth-

odism ever produced. Before his conversion, he was a lawyer of marvelous ability. His friends expected to see him rise to the highest rank in his profession—to a seat with the Marshalls, the Storys, and the Kents. In the full tide of success and popularity, he was deeply convicted of sin at a camp-meeting, to which he had made an afternoon visit. After months of unrest and agony, he was powerfully converted, while stretched on his face in a farmer's kitchen, with many Christian friends praying around him. I have often heard the story from the lips of Father and Mother Kent, formerly of Lima, New York, now of the New Jerusalem, who were present on that memorable occasion. He at once began to preach. Several sinners were converted under his first discourse. He became a preacher of wonderful eloquence and power. The most astonishing results followed his ministrations. Thirteen years after his conversion he was appointed editor of the *Ladies' Repository*. In the General Conference of 1844, he delivered a great speech upon the powers of the General Conference as related to the episcopacy, which so electrified that body that, eleven days after, he was elected bishop, along with Edmund S. Janes. He fully justified his elevation to that high and holy office. For eight years he traveled through the Church, like a great blazing torch, dispelling the darkness of sin from thousands of lives, and kindling the flames of sacred love in tens of thousands of hearts.

Thirteen years after his conversion, while widely useful and marvelously blest in his pulpit and personal labors, and while walking in the full light of justifying grace, he was convicted by the Holy Ghost that there was in him a proneness to wander; that his tempers were not always right; that in his heart were

many roots of bitterness "springing up" to trouble him. He at once began to seek, with all his might, the blessing of a clean heart. He sought a definite blessing, definitely and agonizingly, for many months. He asked the help of others; he went forward for prayers; he consecrated; he prayed; he struggled. While on his knees in his chamber the blessing came. "Suddenly," he says, "I felt as though a Hand Omnipotent, not of wrath, but of love, were laid upon my brow. That Hand, as it passed upon me, moved downward. It wrought within and without, and wherever it moved it seemed to leave the glorious impress of the Savior's image. For a few moments the deep of God's love swallowed me up; all its billows rolled over me." From that hour to the close of his moral existence, Hamline referred to it as the great epoch of his life.

Few greater men than Charles G. Finney has the Presbyterian Church ever given to the world. He, too, was a lawyer. He had a most powerful and marvelous conversion. After hours of seeking and praying in the woods, he went into his back office to continue his supplications. The place was perfectly dark; but it appeared to him perfectly light. As he went in and shut the door, it seemed as though he met the Lord Jesus face to face. He fell down at his feet in an ecstasy of bliss, and lay there for hours. Rising at length, and returning to the front room, the power of God came on him so overwhelmingly that it seemed to him that he should die of joy. He says: "I could feel the impression, like a wave of electricity, going through and through me. Indeed, it seemed to come in waves of liquid love. It seemed like the very breath of God. I can recollect distinctly that it seemed to fan me, like immense wings."

And yet that man, after twenty-two years of walking in the light, of growth in grace, and of the most wonderful success in winning souls, was convicted by the Holy Ghost of the need of a clean heart. His wife was in a decline, and was doomed to die. He found something in his heart which said to God, "No; it shall not be." His lips did not say so; his will did not; he did not wish to say it. But something in his heart, which he could not control, did. He cried to God to take that something out of his heart. He definitely and agonizingly sought the blessing of a clean heart. He sought for weeks and months. At length he was enabled to take the blessing by faith. He was filled with peace and joy so much greater than he had ever known before that, as he says in his autobiography, he "could not realize that" he "had ever before been truly in communion with God." More than twenty years after, he wrote: "My bondage seemed to be, at that time, entirely broken; and since then I have had the freedom of a child with a loving parent. It seems to me that I can find God within me, in such a sense that I can rest upon him and be quiet, lay my heart in his hand, and nestle down in his perfect will, and have no carefulness or anxiety." That great man lived thirty-two years after he obtained the second blessing, and, to the end, preached the doctrine, and bore testimony to the experience.

There are thousands of men and women in the Church to-day who give substantially this testimony: "At such a time and in such a place, after deep conviction and earnest and definite seeking, I was soundly and joyfully converted. The devil has never been able to make me doubt that fact. So many years, or months, after, while I was walking in the light, and

growing in grace and performing every known duty, I was overwhelmingly convicted of my need of a clean heart. The Holy Ghost turned his great flash-light upon me, and showed me the depths of depravity which were in my soul. I cried out, 'Create in me a clean heart, O God.' I sought that blessing as definitely as I had sought pardon. I sought with intense hungering and thirsting. I sought long and agonizingly. At length I found it by faith. In a moment my agony was gone, my thirst was quenched, my hunger was satisfied, my soul was deluged with the glory of God. The second blessing was as definite and distinct as the first, and as much more blessed and wonderful as the sun is brighter than the moon."

What will you do with these testimonies? If they do not prove the reality of the second blessing, then nothing can be proved by human testimony. If you deny the reality of the second blessing, you must deny the reality of the first. You must either accept the testimony of those who say they have experienced a definite, distinct, peculiar *second blessing*, or you must say there is no such thing as experimental religion. It is of no avail to say that *you* have not experienced the second blessing, that *you* got it all at conversion, and that therefore there is no such thing as the second blessing. The testimony of one child, who has experienced pardon and regeneration, proves the reality of that experience against the outcry of ten thousand infidels who say, "I have never been converted." What if you have not experienced the second blessing? Millions have; and you may, if you will.

The fourth reason why we believe the doctrine of the second blessing is, that it is taught in the expe-

riences of many Bible characters. I will mention a few. There was old Jacob. A more unlovely character it would be hard to find. At his birth he had hold of his brother's heel. So they named him Jacob, supplanter, trickster, cheat. Like his name was his nature. He jewed his brother out of the birthright. He lied to his blind old father, and swore to the lie, and stole the blessing intended for Esau. An object of hatred to everybody but his mother, whose disposition he inherited, he fled to a foreign land. The first night he lay down to sleep on the bare ground, near a city which he dared not enter. He had no pillow but a stone—a better one than he deserved. But, in his utter wretchedness, God had pity on him, and gave him a wonderful vision. There stood a ladder. The foot was right at his feet. The top reached to the very throne of God. It seemed to say: "Vile as you are, you may climb up to heaven." God spoke to the wanderer in words of tenderness and love. Waking, Jacob said: "Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not. How dreadful is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." Jacob was converted at Bethel. From that time on he lived a prayerful, godly life. Penurious as he was by nature, he religiously gave one-tenth of his income to the Lord. His pocket was converted, which is more than can be affirmed of multitudes of modern Church members. He was a better man than many Christians who sneer at his piety. And yet his old Jacob nature remained in him. It was more or less subdued by the new nature, but was not killed. Twenty-one years after he received the first blessing, he suddenly came face to face with

death. As in the light of eternity he saw himself as he was. Alone in the darkness, on the bank of Jabbok, he prayed to be delivered from himself. All night he prayed, determined that he would not be denied. Alone, he was not alone. A man, the Angel of the covenant in human form, wrestled with him till the break of day. He felt that not to be overcome was to have the blessing. His physical strength almost spent, in dreadful agony with a dislocated hip, he still clung to his Redeemer, with both arms around his neck, crying, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me!" That was enough. His faith prevailed. The Divine One blessed him there, and said: "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with man, and hast prevailed." "And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my soul is saved." Jacob received the second blessing at Peniel. His after history shows that the old, carnal, Jacob nature was killed that night by the power of Almighty God.

King David received the second blessing—at least, he sought it—as a definite experience. Read the fifty-first Psalm, written after he had returned to God from the sins of adultery and murder. Six times he prays for pardon (that is the first blessing) and for perfect cleansing (that is the second blessing). Hear the royal suppliant: "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me." That is something far beyond conversion. Because he did not obtain a one-hundred-per-cent pure heart at conversion, he was enticed into

adultery through the lust of the flesh. Now he prays for the second blessing—

> "A heart in every thought renewed,
> And full of love divine;
> Perfect, and right, and pure, and good."

We know that David sought the second blessing; we believe he received it. When he was fleeing from Jerusalem, on account of Absalom's rebellion, and was going along the way, with the veterans of many victorious campaigns about him, a miserable whelp named Shimei threw stones at him, and insulted him in every conceivable way. One of his generals, Abishai, said to him: "Let me go over and take off that dead dog's head!" But David said: "Let him curse. The Lord has said unto him, Curse David." I do not believe that anybody but a wholly sanctified man, in those circumstances, could have uttered those words and have manifested that spirit.

The apostles received the second blessing on the day of Pentecost. Does any one doubt that? They had received the first blessing, conversion, long before. Jesus had told them that their names were "written in heaven;" three of them had been with the Master on the Mount of Transfiguration; and he had told the Father that they were not of the world, even as he was not of the world. And yet he prayed: "Sanctify them through thy truth," and just before he went up to heaven he said to them: "John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." Those men had previously received the blessing of pardon and regeneration. But, on the day of Pentecost, they re-

ceived the second blessing, entire sanctification and the baptism of fire and of the Holy Ghost.

Cornelius and his military household were justified believers when Peter went to them. We have the apostle's own testimony that they had received the first blessing. But while he was preaching to them, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on Peter himself on the day of Pentecost. Certainly that was the second blessing.

You have read of Deacon Philip's great revival at Samaria. After his converts had all been baptized and received into the Church, he held a Holiness Convention, with a couple of brethren from Jerusalem to help him. The converts were told by Peter and John (that was pretty good authority) that there was something for them besides growth in grace; that there was a definite second blessing. "And," the Book says, "they received the Holy Ghost."

In one of his journeys, Paul found twelve persons who had received the first blessing, under the labors of a disciple of John the Baptist. He said to them: "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" They answered that that was a new doctrine. They did not know what he meant. He did not leave them till they did know. Before the meeting closed, "the Holy Ghost came on them, and they spake with tongues and prophesied." That was the second blessing.

The chief reason why we believe in the second blessing remains to be stated; it is directly taught in the Word of God. I will not dwell on this point, but will give a few texts, and ask the Holy Ghost to write them on your memories and hearts. There is Paul's prayer for his converts at Thessalonica. They had

received the first blessing, and were "all the children of the light." Yet Paul prayed: "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly: and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he who calleth you, who also will do it." That is the second blessing. John writes, in his first letter: "If we walk in the light" ("*we*" there means Christians, those who have received the first blessing) "as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, *and*" (now comes the second blessing) "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." Again he writes: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins" (that is the first blessing) "and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." That is the second blessing.

Why should we seek the second blessing? First, we should seek the second blessing that we may keep the first blessing. Some one asks: "Can not a man get to heaven on the first blessing?" We answer, "Yes." If you have been, and are, born of God, you are an heir to a heavenly inheritance; if you die in the enjoyment of the first blessing, you are sure of celestial glory. But if you have the first blessing, you want everything else which God has for you. If you say, "Well, I have the first blessing; I can get to heaven on that, and that is all I care for," that way of talking proves conclusively that you do not enjoy the first blessing. If you have the first blessing, you will long after the second, just as soon as it is explained to you, so that you clearly understand "how great is" the "goodness which" God has "laid up for them that fear him." The second blessing is just the thing to clinch and fasten the first. This is the "grace wherein we

stand." It is a very great thing to enjoy the first blessing uninterruptedly for a term of years; and very few persons ever have without experiencing the second blessing. It is a dreadful fact that a very large proportion of our young converts backslide. Why is it? In many cases it is because they are *ours*, and not God's. But a multitude of real converts lose the blessing of justification and regeneration, because their pastors and class-leaders do not lead them into the enjoyment of the blessing of perfect love. A man who has experienced the second blessing can fall into sin; but the liability is a thousand times less than in the case of the man who has got no further than the first blessing.

Secondly, we should seek the second blessing that we may grow in grace. God commands us to grow; but there is very little growth possible until the weeds of depravity are all pulled out of the garden of the soul. Few Christians make any real growth in grace till after they have experienced the second blessing. We have known individuals who have professed to enjoy the first blessing for forty years; and yet they are no further on in the way than they were the day they were converted. The man in the text could never have made much use of his eyes, if Jesus had not touched them the second time.

Thirdly, we should seek the second blessing, because it is the working degree in the fraternity of Jesus Christ. In many of the secret lodges (as I am informed) nearly all the work is done in the higher degrees. Nearly all real Christian work is done in the second degree. You will never accomplish much for God and souls till your old, selfish, jealous, envious, unbelieving, carnal nature has been killed; till you are

baptized with the Holy Ghost. Peter accomplished more for God and souls the first thirty minutes after he experienced the second blessing, than during the three years in which he had only the first blessing. God can not trust you with a large amount of success till you are entirely sanctified. If he should, you would get proud; and the work would be marred, and your soul might be lost. Till you get onto the solid rock of full salvation, you will need all your time and strength to keep your own head above water; you will have little leisure, or heart, to do anything for the rescue of drowning souls. That is why Jesus said to his disciples, whom he had just commissioned to convert the world: "Tarry ye in Jerusalem" until ye receive the second blessing, until ye be endued with power from on high."

Fourthly, we should seek the second blessing because that was the purpose of God in giving us the first. If the salvation of the gospel stopped with the first blessing, it would be largely a failure. If Jesus had not touched the blind man's eyes the second time, the world would have pronounced him a failure as an eye-doctor. If we try to live on the comparatively low plain of the first blessing, the world, judging from our defective sight and bad tempers and stumbling gait, will pronounce Christ a failure as a Savior from sin. You came into yonder vestibule that, through it, you might get into this larger room. You had no other purpose. Regeneration is the vestibule to God's great temple. The second blessing—entire sanctification, perfect love, the baptism of the Holy Ghost, or whatever other name the Bible gives it—is the main edifice. God brought you into the vestibule that you might quickly enter the inner shrine, and

explore all its wonders and beauties, through time and eternity. You linger in yonder vestibule only long enough to get rid of the snow, or mud, or dust, or rain, which you brought in from the outer world. You should linger in the vestibule-experience of pardon and regeneration only long enough to shake off all that clings to you of the world, by a perfect consecration, preparatory to entering the second blessing by a naked faith in Jesus Christ.

VII.

THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY GHOST.

"John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence."—ACTS I, 5.

WHEN the disciples saw their Master bound and, seemingly, powerless in the hands of his enemies, they were filled with fear and dismay. When, a few days later, they saw him lie a stiffened corpse in Joseph's tomb, the last glimmer of hope faded out from the sky of their minds. They said to themselves: "He was not the Christ; he was a deceiver, or deceived; the prophets were liars, or have been misread; Israel will never be emancipated and glorified, or we shall not live to see the promised day." Sadness, gloom, despair settled down upon their minds like an impenetrable fog. The fog lasted three days and three nights; but on Sunday morning the fog was dispelled and the sun suddenly reappeared.

When the disciples knew that the Lord had risen, their gloom changed to joy and all their former hopes revived. "Now," said they to each other, "the kingdom will be restored to Israel; now the Roman yoke will be broken; now the Messiah will take the throne and rule the world with his scepter of power; now we shall be princes upon the earth." They waited many days to know what his plans would be, and how he would perform the work which they had, in their minds, appointed him to do. At length they ventured to ask: "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the king-

dom again to Israel?" This was the answer in part: "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father has put in his own power. But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. But tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." When he had thus spoken, he was received up into heaven, and they saw him no more.

While the Savior was delivering his valedictory address, the disciples must have recalled the words which he uttered at the Passover supper, just before his crucifixion: "If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of Truth, whom the world can not receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him. It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you: but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. The Comforter, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, shall teach you all things."

This was the view which the disciples had, after the eyes of their souls had been opened: "Jesus had gone away to heaven, never to return, bodily, till the end of the world. They were left behind, not to fight, but to preach; not to raise armies, but to found

Churches; not to conquer all nations, but to disciple all nations. A work of great magnitude and difficulty lay before them. They were very weak. As they were, they could not begin to perform the labors which they were commanded to undertake. But Jesus had promised to endue them with power from on high. He would send the Comforter, the Spirit of God. He would baptize them with the Holy Ghost. They were to return to the city of Jerusalem. There they were to remain till the promised Comforter should come, till they should be baptized with the Holy Ghost. Then they should go forth with power, and their labors would be crowned with abundant success."

The disciples obeyed the Master's injunction. They returned from the mount of Ascension to the city where their Lord had been crucified. They went up into the upper room where the Passover supper had been eaten. All the disciples, whom an invitation could reach, were gathered together. The entire number was one hundred and twenty. Some were men; some were women. Mary, the mother of Jesus, was there. The eleven apostles were present as leaders. First, a Church was formally organized by inscribing one hundred and twenty names on a register, and by the election of an apostle to take the place from which the traitor Judas had expelled himself. Then, with one heart and one accord, they gave themselves to prayer. Each of them took the promise, "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence," and earnestly and importunately presented it to the Father, demanding its fulfillment in the name of the Son. Like an army of unconquerable heroes, they besieged the citadel of heaven, while one hundred and twenty huge battering-rams of prayer concentrated

their united power upon a single gate. That prayer-meeting lasted ten days. Doubtless the petitioners paused for food and rest and sleep. But no work employed their time but prayer; no thought possessed their minds but the promised gift. It was their unanimous resolve that that prayer-meeting should not close till the Comforter had come. So they prayed Friday and Saturday and Sunday and Monday, and on and on through the following week. The morning of the second Sunday dawned. It was the day of Pentecost, the Feast of Harvest, the Feast of Weeks. It was the anniversary of the giving of the law on Mount Sinai. It was the fiftieth day after Easter. It was the day which the great Head of the Church had resolved to make forever memorable by sending down the Holy Comforter into the world and into the hearts of his people. The disciples had thought and talked about the coming of the Comforter, and had prayed for the blessed baptism so long, that they were fully prepared to receive what the Father was ready to bestow. By fixing their minds on the promise and on God, and holding them there so long, they had emptied themselves of all worldly plans and purposes and desires and thoughts; they had emptied themselves of self, and were ready to be filled with all the fullness of God. They longed for the blessing with unutterable longings. Every heart cried to God: "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me!" And so they were in the act and attitude of prayer, as on other days, when suddenly the place was filled with a mysterious sound like that of a mighty rushing wind. At the same instant something which looked like a cloven tongue of fire appeared upon the head of every one; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.

Their prayers were answered. The promise of Jesus was fulfilled. They were armed and equipped for the conquest of the world. That very day they began the work of preaching the gospel to every creature; and, before the sun went down, the infant Church was enlarged by the addition of three thousand souls.

What was the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and what did it do for those who received it? First, it was not the impartation of regenerating grace. The story in the second chapter of Acts is not the story of the conversion of the disciples of Jesus. They were converted before that day. In examining this subject we will confine our thoughts to the apostles, and let them represent the whole body of disciples. The apostles were converted men when they began to pray for the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Perhaps this statement needs no argument. It is almost a self-evident truth. Why do we think they were converted men when the promise of the Spirit's baptism was given? The name by which they were called establishes the fact. They were called disciples, the name universally employed by the early Christians to distinguish the converted from the unconverted. Why were they called disciples if they were unregenerated sinners? Again, the company they kept shows that they were converted men. They were the intimate friends and companions of Jesus for three years, beholding all his wonderful works and hearing his more wonderful words. This intimate association with Jesus must have produced one of two results. It must either have drawn them into real spiritual union with the Savior, or have driven them off into the world. If you say that one of the twelve was with Jesus three years, and yet was not a converted man, I answer, Judas

was a backslider. Again, the prayer which the Savior offered in behalf of the apostles proves that they were converted men. Notice some of the expressions which he used: "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word." "I pray for them; I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine." The apostles had been taken out of the world and had been given to the Savior. Were they not converted men? "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world," again the Son addressed the Father. "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me." The apostles were fit to be taken to heaven and to behold the Redeemer's glory there. Surely they were converted men. Once more, the parable of the "Vine and the Branches" proves that the apostles were truly regenerated. "I am the vine," said Jesus to the twelve; "ye are the branches." How were they branches in the true vine if they were unregenerate sinners?

They were converted men; they had been born again; they were heirs of the celestial glory. It is true they were weak and ignorant and erring and imperfect and infantile; but they were the true children of God. Therefore the baptism of the Holy Ghost was not the regeneration of the apostles.

Secondly, the baptism of the Holy Ghost was not merely the impartation of the Spirit's influence. The disciples had the Spirit before. Every regenerated soul has the Spirit. To be a Christian is not to be baptized

with water; it is not to belong to the Church; it is not to profess religion. To be a Christian is to be born again. To be a Christian is to be born of the Holy Ghost.

Once more, the baptism of the Holy Ghost was not the impartation of more and more of the Spirit's influence and power. At one of his interviews with the apostles, Jesus breathed on them and said: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." We must believe that that prayer was answered; and yet the baptism of the Holy Ghost was something in the future, something not yet received, something that was promised, something that could not be bestowed till the Son had ascended to the Father.

The promise was that the disciples should be baptized with the Holy Ghost. The fulfillment is described in the words, "They were filled with the Holy Ghost." To be baptized with the Holy Ghost, therefore, is to be filled with the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is a Person—a Divine Person. Jesus gave him the name "Comforter." He is the Third Person of the Adorable Trinity. As the matter presents itself to my mind, a man is baptized, or filled, with the Holy Ghost when God the Holy Ghost comes, in his personality, enters the soul, takes full possession, and makes it his home. The baptism of the Holy Ghost, in the case of the disciples at Pentecost, was that act, distinct from, and subsequent to, regeneration, by which the promised Comforter entered, completely subdued, and enthroned himself in their souls.

What did the baptism of the Holy Ghost do for those who received it? Study the lives of the apostles and see. Before Pentecost, as every one knows, they

were worldly, unsteady, doubting, timid, weak; after Pentecost, they were spiritual, steadfast, full of faith, bold, strong. Before Pentecost they were worldly. They were worldly-minded. They were what Paul calls "carnal." They took low, narrow, mean, selfish views of things. They thought that Jesus had come to set up an earthly kingdom; that his kingdom was to be extended by physical force; that they were to hold offices of honor and pecuniary profit in the new government; that they were to be temporal princes, ruling over Gentile tribes. They often disputed among themselves as to who should have the highest places. They were jealous, narrow-minded, and dull of moral comprehension. After Pentecost, they were intensely spiritual. They took high, broad, noble, unselfish views of things. They saw that Christ's kingdom was a spiritual kingdom; that it was to be extended by the use of moral means; that love was its central idea. Henceforth all desire and thought of worldly honors and riches vanished from their minds, and they were seized with an overmastering passion to go out into the world and toil and—if need were—suffer and die for the honor of Jesus and the salvation of men. Henceforth their lives were hid with Christ in God. Their feet were on the earth, but their heads were above the clouds.

Before Pentecost they were unstable. One day they seemed to be full of zeal and devotion, ready to die for their Master's honor and life. The next day they were ready to turn their backs upon Christ and return to their merchandise and nets. When he was arrested in the garden, they all forsook him and fled. Their spiritual pathway was a zig-zag. If they had

had a copy of the Methodist Hymnal, they would frequently have been heard to sing:

> "Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it—
> Prone to leave the God I love."

After Pentecost they were steadfast. They were full of zeal every day. They were ready to lay down their lives for God at any moment. From the hour when the heavenly baptism came upon them they never faltered for a second. Their spiritual pathway was as straight as a sunbeam. They pressed right on toward heaven in a straight line. The sword, the stake, the rack, the cross, awaited their coming. But on they went, toward a martyr's death and a martyr's crown.

Before Pentecost the apostles were doubting. They had a little faith; they had much unbelief. The slightest difficulties and dangers would stagger them and fill them with dismay. One day they went out on the little lake of Gennesaret in a boat. Jesus, being weary, fell asleep. Suddenly a terrific storm burst upon them. They were filled with fear. They forgot that the boat could not possibly sink with Jesus in it, just as we, in the midst of the trials and troubles of life, forget that we can not be harmed if the Savior is by our side. They awoke the Master with the cry: "Lord, save us! we perish!" He arose and stilled the tempest with a word, and then rebuked them, saying, "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" At almost every step in their Christian pilgrimage they earned the rebuke: "O ye of little faith." After Pentecost they were full of faith. Never again did they doubt the Savior's power, or the truth of his prom-

ises. They had a faith which shone most brightly in the deepest darkness; a faith which silenced the threats of wicked men; a faith which wrenched off iron chains and burst open prison doors; a faith which carried them over mountains and seas and continents, through blood and fire and death. They were heroes of faith, every one, after Pentecost.

Before Pentecost they were timid. In times of danger they were like a flock of sheep assailed by wolves. Peter, the boldest of the twelve, played the coward in the most shameful way. Before the arrest in the garden, he brandished a sword and declared that he would fight for his Master, and follow him even "into prison and death." But when the pinch came, he ran away with the rest. To save his life he denied his Lord, told an infamous lie, and swore to the lie. He intended to be true to Jesus, but was overcome by fear. After Pentecost, Peter and his fellows were as bold as lions. Henceforth they did not know what fear was. In the city of Jerusalem they dared to face the rulers and the mob, and tell them, to their teeth, that they were the murderers of the Lord Jesus. When forbidden to preach they continued to preach. When brought before the Sanhedrin, and threatened with the severest punishment if they did not desist, they turned the court-room into a church, and began to preach to their judges. When shut up in prison, they made the vaulted cells ring with shouts of joy and songs of praise. As soon as they were released, they returned to their work and proclaimed the word of life in the most public places they could find. They were so filled with holy courage that if their Captain had sent them to the Empire of Hell, to preach the gospel to Satan and his confederate devils, they would

have gone without a moment's hesitation or the twitching of a nerve. They new that God was with them, and they could see no reason why they should be afraid.

Before Pentecost they were weak. When Jesus was with them they seemed to have some power against the kingdom of darkness; but when Jesus was out of sight they were like other men. While the Master, with three of his disciples, was on the Mount of Transfiguration, the others remained at the mountain's base. A man came bringing his son, who had a devil, and besought them to cast the unclean spirit out. They could not make the devil obey their voice. He did not fear their power. They had no power. After Pentecost they were filled with power. All the power which was in Jesus seemed to have been transferred to them. They healed the sick; they made the lame to walk; they cast out devils; they even raised the dead. They had mighty power in prayer. When they prayed, the heavens bent and the earth shook. They had marvelous power to present the truth so that wicked men would quail and melt and believe and be saved. Under their preaching, thousands were often converted in a single day. So long as the Church retained the fullness of the Holy Ghost, the gospel spread from heart to heart, and from family to family, and from city to city, and from continent to continent, like fire in the dry grass of a Western prairie.

The change which took place in the disciples on the day of Pentecost was marked and marvelous. Before that day they were as weak as infants, as timid as sheep, as wavering as the sea, as changeable as the wind, as sluggish as snails. After that day they were as strong as giants, as bold as lions, as firm as a rock,

as steady as the onward flow of a mighty river, as swift as eagles. The baptism of the Holy Ghost filled them with zeal, with fixedness of purpose, with faith, with courage, with love, with joy, with holiness, with power.

The promise of the Spirit's baptism is made to all. The text is addressed to every one of you. In his first sermon, Peter said to his hearers: "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off." Then he quoted the old prophet, Joel: "It shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prohpesy; and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy." In the Apostolic Church every convert was made to understand that it was his privilege to be filled with the Spirit. Most of them grasped the thought, and received the blessing within a few days, or hours, after their conversion. Cornelius and his household, previously accepted and justified by God, received the baptism of the Holy Ghost while Peter was preaching to them. You remember how Deacon Philip went down to Samaria and brought about a great revival. Multitudes were converted. Philip baptized the converts, and received them into the Church. In too many cases we are satisfied when our converts have received water baptism, and have had their names written in the Church register. We seem to think that is all. But not so in the case of that great revival in

Samaria. Philip knew that there was something more for his converts. He sent up to Jerusalem, and invited Peter and John to come down. The converts were assembled. The apostles gave them instructions in regard to the second blessing, prayed for them, and laid their hands upon them; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost. Paul, on one of his preaching tours, found some Christians at Ephesus, who had been converted under the labors of some minister beside himself and his helpers. He questioned them as to their religious experience: "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" They replied that they did not know that any such blessing had been promised. When Paul explained the doctrine, pointed out the way, and laid his hands upon their heads, they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.

In the primitive Church, to have the Spirit's baptism was the rule; not to be filled with the Spirit was the exception. Hence the wonderful rapidity and power with which the Church spread herself out over the nations of the earth during the first two hundred years. Millions were converted in a year. So it was as long as the doctrine of the text was preached and received. Then came a falling away, succeeded by the Dark Ages. We have not got back to the point where the Church was when the falling away began. In our day, not to be filled with the Spirit is the rule; to have the Spirit's baptism is the exception. This grand old doctrine has been covered up and hidden from the people of God. If the Apostle Paul should rise from the dead, and go through the Churches, asking, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" I fear the great majority would answer, in the words of the twelve men at Ephesus, "We have

not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost," as a permanent dweller in the believer's heart. Hence the tardiness with which the work of God moves on in this land.

The greatest need of the times is the baptism of the Holy Ghost in all our Churches. No intelligent lover of his country can look into the future without alarm. There are as many separate evils as fingers on my hand, any one of which may wreck this Republic. There is the greatest of them all, the saloon; and political corruption, and anarchy, and Sabbath desecration, and the incoming of the scum of Europe. Nothing can save us from utter ruin but the mighty baptism of the Holy Ghost on the Churches of America. O that it may come upon us all this hour!

Do you ask: "What would the baptism of the Spirit do for me?" Just what it did for the apostles, except the power to work miracles.

The baptism of the Spirit will give you an abiding evidence of your acceptance with God. Now you are frequently tormented with doubts. You can not always say: "I know that Jesus saves me now; I know that if I should die this minute, heaven would be my home." But when the Spirit's baptism comes upon you, you will be able to say, every day of every year and every hour of every day: "I know that I am a member of the Royal family of heaven." Is it not worth more than the wealth of a thousand worlds like this to be able to look up into the face of that Great Being who piled up the mountains, and dug out the seas, and kindled the quenchless fires of the sun, and lighted the lamps of the stars, and upholds all things by the word of his power, and say, "Abba,

Father?" That will be your abiding experience when you have received the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

The baptism of the Spirit will give you stability of Christian character. Now you are unsteady and unstable. You are up, and down; hopeful, despairing; exultant, dejected; hot, cold; on the mountain top, in the dark and foggy valley. Now your pathway is a zigzag. For a little while you grow in grace, and the angels have great expectations that you will become a strong and useful Christian. Then come months of sliding back. When the pastor begins a protracted meeting, hoping that sinners will be saved, he must expend weeks of labor on you to get you up to the revival pitch, where you ought to be all the while. But when you have received the fullness of the Spirit, your religion will be up to the revival pitch all the time; you will be "rooted and grounded in love;" you will be "steadfast and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord;" your course will indeed be "the path of the just," a "shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." At each quarterly love-feast, you will be able to say, "The past quarter has been the best of my life." "O," you say, "I am so fickle; I can never become rooted." You do not know the power of the Holy Spirit. This blessed baptism, about which we are talking, will make the most fickle soul as firm as the everlasting rock. When you are baptized with the Holy Ghost, it will appear to those who did not know you before that firmness and stability are naturally the strongest traits of your character.

The baptism of the Spirit will give you a satisfying portion. Now—I speak to many who are in the

Church—you are not satisfied. The religion of Jesus Christ is not what you thought it was; it does not fully meet the longings of your soul. There is a great void in your heart which Christ does not fill. You keep running out into the world after that enjoyment which you do not find in the service of God. You are forever saying: "Why can't I do this?" "Why can't I do that?" "Why can't I go here?" "Why can't I go there?" "What is the harm in playing cards, in dancing, in going to the theater?" These questions show that you are not satisfied. But when you are baptized with the Holy Ghost, you will have that which will fully meet the longings of your immortal soul. You will want nothing more but more room to hold more of the love and light which will come pouring in upon you. Suppose you had on your premises a well, going down into the rock ten, twenty, thirty feet, always full of cold, clear, sparkling water. Would you have any occasion to go out into the street, after a shower, and drink from a puddle of muddy water? If any one should ask you to drink such a beverage as that, you would say, "I have a well on my premises." When you are baptized with the Holy Ghost, you will have a well in your soul. Then the words of Jesus to the woman of Samaria will be fulfilled: "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again; but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." O the well of perfect satisfaction that springs up in the soul where the Holy Comforter is an abiding Guest!

The baptism of the Holy Ghost will make you happy. You sometimes deem yourselves happy now. But

then you will say: "I never knew what happiness was before." Let the Spirit come in and fill your soul, and you will be happier than you now imagine you will be in heaven. You will sometimes be so happy that you will feel constrained to ask God to withdraw his hand lest you die from excess of joy. You will not always have these ecstasies; but you will always have peace. You will seem to be sailing on a boundless ocean of love, and sometimes the billows of bliss will roll over you, drowning you in unspeakable joy.

You will have power when you have received the baptism of the Holy Ghost. You will have power over temptation. I do not say that you will not be tempted; you will be tempted, as long as you strive to live a Christian life. Your Savior was tempted by the devil; you must not expect to escape. But when the Holy Ghost is come upon you, you will beat the devil down, and come out of every conflict more than conqueror. The Word declares that you "shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." Put this alongside the text, "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence," and you have the meaning, "When ye are baptized with the Holy Ghost, ye shall bruise Satan under your feet." Out of every conflict with the arch-adversary you will come stronger than ever before. You will have power in prayer. I do not mean that your prayers will be loud or low, or long or short. There is no power in noise; it is the lightning, and not the thunder, that kills. I say nothing about the latitude or longitude of your prayers. But they will be deep and high when the Holy Ghost fills your heart. They will reach the ear of God, and thrill the hearts of men. It seems to me that there are not so many men and women in the Church, in these days, who are

mighty in prayer, as in the earlier times. I have seen saints of God whom I would go further to hear pray than to hear the greatest preachers in the world. Your grammar may be faulty, your words few and limping; but when you have the holy baptism, you will pray with wondrous power.

In a Church where I was pastor, many years ago, there was an old German brother who was filled with the Spirit. His testimonies in the social meetings were given in English; and it was the queerest English you ever heard. But when he prayed, English would not do, and he poured out his soul to God in German. We could not understand a sentence. But his prayers thrilled us as no other prayers did in that Church, because he prayed in the Holy Ghost.

You will have power to speak for Jesus when you are baptized with the Holy Ghost. Your testimonies may not be long or eloquent; but they will reach the hearts of those who hear; and souls will be saved through your instrumentality. A young Baptist minister, who was filled with the Spirit, and who never missed an opportunity to speak a word for Jesus, happened one day, while riding alone behind his horse, to stop at a wayside watering-trough to let the animal drink. It happened that another young man, a stranger, drove up from the opposite side for the same purpose. While the horses were drinking, the minister said to the other: "I hope you love the Lord. If you do not, I want to commend him to you as your best Friend. Seek him with all your heart." That was all; they turned and went their ways. But the young man thus addressed had received an arrow in his soul which he could not shake out. He was soon converted, and was called to the ministry. He devoted himself

to missionary work, and was sent to Africa. Years went by. The young missionary never prayed without thanking God for the words dropped at the wayside watering-trough, and praying for blessings upon him by whom they were spoken. He longed to know the name of the stranger, that he might send him his thanks. Meanwhile the object of his longing had died. One day a box of books came to the missionary in Africa. The first book which he took in his hand bore the title, "The Life of James Brainerd Tailor." Opening the volume, he saw the portrait of the man who had won him to Christ. Once more, on his knees, he thanked God for the meeting and the words at the wayside watering-trough. You may not be a James Brainerd Tailor; but, after you have received the baptism of the Holy Ghost, you will be able to speak words which will reach and save the souls of men. The Holy Spirit, dwelling in your heart, will give you the right words to speak at the right time. A Scotch minister, walking along a street in Edinburgh on the evening of a hot summer day, saw, standing in a doorway to get a breath of fresh air, a woman holding a little child in her arms. The Spirit put these words in his mouth: "Woman, is your soul lying on the bosom of Jesus, as that little one lies in your arms?" That was enough. The Spirit shot the arrow into her heart, and she was soon converted. McCheyne, visiting a rolling-mill, saw one of the workmen open the door of a furnace. Looking into the flaming abyss and into the workman's eyes, he said: "Does that remind you of anything?" The wicked man caught a glimpse of hell, repented, and was saved. The youngest and most insignificant person in this congregation will have power so to speak the word of life that many souls will be saved,

when the baptism of the Holy Ghost has been received.

In a village in Vermont, many years ago, lived an infidel. He knew all the ins and outs of infidelity, and could confound all who dared to meet him in argument. He was a regular attendant at Church, but was so armored against the truth that no shot from the pulpit ever reached his heart. On one occasion the minister prepared a sermon with the greatest care, on purpose to kill this infidel, and fired it off at him one Sunday morning. The shot seemed to take effect; for, not long after, the infidel came forward, professed religion, and joined the Church. The minister was overjoyed at the thought that his great sermon had converted the infidel, and, at the first opportunity, he told him so. "Indeed," said the infidel, "your sermon did not have the slightest effect; I could answer all its arguments to my perfect satisfaction. I will tell you what converted me. You know Jim Eaton, the Methodist fool. I met him one cold morning going to work with his saw and sawbuck. He was singing along, as happy as a lark. I said: 'Jim, what makes you so happy?' 'Bless the Lord,' he said, 'I am happy because Jesus is in my soul!' I said to myself, he tells the truth. He does not know enough to misrepresent, like some Christians. He is happy, and his religion makes him so. I am not happy; I am a poor miserable sinner. I hurried home, went to my closet, threw myself on my knees, and asked God to save me as he had Jim Eaton." It was the Holy Ghost, speaking in power out of the heart of the half-idiot, which brought that proud infidel to repentance and salvation. There will be such power in you when you are baptized with the Holy Ghost.

"How shall I obtain the baptism of the Holy Ghost?" you ask. You could answer your own question if you should try: Consecration, prayer, faith. Dedicate your all to God; pray for the promised gift; expect it while you pray.

"I have heard this doctrine preached all my life. I have sought the blessing. Why have I not received?" That is what you are saying to yourself, while I am speaking. There are many reasons. You do not, on the whole, desire the gift of the Holy Ghost. On some accounts, you do; on the whole, you do not. If you could have the baptism of the Spirit and be proud and vain and worldly and selfish too, you would have the baptism. As that can not be, you finally conclude that you would rather have the world without the fullness of the Spirit, than the fullness of the Spirit without the world. When you desire this blessing above all things else, you can have it. Empty yourself of the vanities which you love so ardently, and God will fill you to overflowing with himself. Of all who ask the question, "Why do I not receive the Pentecostal blessing?" the answer, for the majority, is the one just given: You do not, on the whole, desire the blessing.

To another class it ought to be said: You do not receive, because you are too proud. You carry your head too high. You look down upon your brethren and sisters. You think more of style than of salvation. You care more for the good opinions of the wealthy and fashionable than for the approbation of God. You must come down from your pinnacle of self-exaltation. You must prostrate yourself in the dust at the foot of the cross. That is where the poor man finds the blessing; that is where the rich man

finds it. That is where the beggar finds it; that is where the king finds it. That is where the half-idiot finds it; that is where the college president finds it.

To another class it ought to be said: You are too penurious to receive the baptism. You grudge every dollar you spend for God. You love money more than you love the souls of men. Your covetous spirit hinders the work of salvation, and brings reproach on the blessed name of Christ. Unloose your purse-strings so that God can get his whole hand in. Then—and not till then—can you expect the Spirit to fill your soul.

Perhaps you are seeking the blessing by works. It is by faith, not by works, that you can receive. Be sure that your consecration is complete. Then give over your vain and foolish struggling, and bear your whole weight on the promise of the text.

Down on the sand, near the margin of the ocean, lies a tiny shell, the cast-off house of some marine creature. How shall the shell be filled with the ocean? It has nothing to do but to lie on the sand. The ocean is before it. It is five thousand miles to the opposite shore. A little way out it is five miles deep. The tide is coming in. Let the little shell lie there, and soon the ocean will roll over it, fill, and engulf it. Lay your little soul down on the sand, by the margin of the boundless ocean of Infinite Love. The tide is coming in; it has been coming in for eighteen hundred years. Lie there, in perfect humiliation and faith, and soon the ocean will roll over you, and fill you with all the fullness of God.

VIII.

RECEIVING THE HOLY GHOST.

"Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?"—ACTS XIX, 2.

PAUL was a traveling preacher. His travels were very extensive. His preaching was as frequent as his opportunities. His work was essentially the same as that of a bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church. He took long journeys; he founded Churches; he presided in Conferences; he ordained ministers; he appointed preachers to their fields of labor.

On one of his episcopal tours, Paul visited a large and splendid city of Asia Minor, named Ephesus. There he found a little company of Christian believers, who had been converted under the preaching of a disciple of John the Baptist. Paul was anxious to know their exact spiritual condition. So a meeting was held, like a Methodist class-meeting. Paul was the leader. Like an old-fashioned class-leader, he examined into their present religious state. To each of them he put this searching question: "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" They were all honest men, and all gave the same answer: "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." Then Paul made them know what was their high privilege in Christ; they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus; the apostles' hands were laid upon them; the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues and prophesied. From this brief

narrative we learn that the reception of the Holy Ghost is an experience which comes after conversion.

You ought to be informed, if you do not already know, that there is great uncertainty as to the correct translation of the text. The Revised Version has it: "Did ye receive the Holy Ghost when ye believed?" The most literal rendering of the original Greek would be: "Received ye the Holy Ghost, having believed?" But it matters little how we translate the question. The fact stands out, so prominent that it can not be misunderstood, here were twelve men who were genuine Christians, who had believed unto the salvation of their souls (for that is what Paul's word "believed" means), but had not received the Holy Ghost Therefore it is absolutely certain that to be born again and to receive the Holy Ghost are two different and distinct experiences.

There is reason to believe that there are multitudes of Christians in these days, like those Ephesian disciples, who have not received the Holy Ghost. Therefore I ask this Christian congregation: "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" You have been convicted of sin. You have repented of all your sins. You have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. You have experienced the blessings of pardon and regeneration. Your names have been written in the Church book on earth, and in the Lamb's Book of Life in heaven. But "have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?"

The question at once springs to every tongue: "What is it to receive the Holy Ghost?" Before that question can be answered, another question must receive attention: "What is the Holy Ghost?" We are constantly using the expression, Holy Ghost, in ser-

mon and prayer and testimony and song. What do we mean? What did Paul and the other inspired authors of the Bible mean when they said "Holy Ghost?"

Every object of thought belongs to one of four classes—substances, attributes, influences or forces, and persons. A substance is something which can be handled, or weighed, or measured, as stone, iron, gold, water, air. Is the Holy Ghost a substance? Can the Holy Ghost be handled, or measured, or weighed? Only the most ignorant would dare to answer "Yes." An attribute is a quality belonging to a substance or a person, as hardness, softness, goodness, wisdom, holiness. Is the Holy Ghost nothing but an attribute? To ask that question is to answer it. It can not be that the Holy Ghost is merely a quality belonging to some person or thing. An influence, or force, is an energy or potency going out from a person or thing, as heat, light, electricity, gravitation. Is the Holy Ghost a mere influence, or force, emanating from the Divine Being? That has never been the belief of the Christian Church. If the Holy Ghost is not a substance, an attribute, or an influence, he must be a person.

Probably no one in this congregation doubts the doctrine of the personality of the Holy Ghost. But as we are too much inclined to think and speak of the Divine Spirit as a lifeless thing, or as a blind, unintelligent, indefinite force, we will briefly look over the argument for the orthodox position in regard to this most important subject. The first reason why we believe that the Holy Ghost is a person is that inspiration uses the personal pronouns *he*, *him*, and *whom* in speaking of the Divine Spirit. Jesus said to his disciples, as recorded in the fourteenth and sixteenth chapters of John: "The Comforter, the Holy Ghost,

whom the Father will send in my name, *he* shall teach you all things. It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send *him* unto you. And when *he* is come, he will reprove the world. When *he*, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth. *He* shall glorify me."

Here, in the space of four short sentences, the masculine personal pronouns are applied to the Holy Ghost no less than five times. Four times the Greek word *ekeinos* is used, which always means *that male person*. Surely the Great Teacher, who spake as never man spake, knew how to use language. In calling the Holy Ghost *he*, *him*, and *whom*, he did the same as to say: "The Holy Ghost is a person."

Again, the Holy Ghost is associated with the Father and the Son in the apostolic benediction and the baptismal formula. Paul closes his second letter to the Corinthians with these words: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all." Christ commanded the apostles to baptize their converts "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." What blasphemy to associate the name of a dead substance, an abstract quality, or a blind, unreasoning force with the awful name of the Supreme Intelligence. Such blasphemy was uttered by Paul and by our blessed Lord, if the Holy Ghost is not a Divine person.

Again, the acts of persons are attributed to the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost *thinks*. The Church at Jerusalem, with the inspired apostles at its head, once sent a circular-letter of advice and instruction to all the other Churches. In it occurs this passage: "It

seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things." To "seem good to the Holy Ghost" means "the Holy Ghost *thought best*." So the Holy Ghost can think. But the power to think belongs only to persons. Hence the Holy Ghost is a person. The Holy Ghost prays. Paul writes in the eighth chapter of Romans: "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit *maketh intercession* for us with groanings which can not be uttered." To make intercession is to pray. Therefore the Holy Ghost prays. But a substance, or an attribute, or an influence can not pray; only persons can pray. Therefore the Holy Ghost is a person. The Holy Ghost speaks. He spoke to Peter on the house-top at Joppa, and told him that three men were below seeking him, and that he must go with them. The Holy Ghost spoke to the Church at Antioch, when they were praying and fasting for the salvation of souls, and said: "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." Things, attributes, and influences can not speak; only persons can speak. Therefore the Holy Ghost must be a person.

The Holy Ghost can be sinned against. You remember the fearful death of Ananias and Sapphira. They were smitten with instant death in the presence of the Church. What fearful sin had they committed to deserve so severe a punishment? Hear the words of Peter to the man: "Ananias, why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Ghost? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God!" Those words, from the lips of an inspired apostle, prove two things: that the Holy Ghost is a person, and that he is a Divine person.

But why waste words in proving what no one who believes the Bible can deny? The Holy Ghost is the Third Person of the ever-blessed Trinity, "of one substance, majesty, and glory with the Father and the Son, very and eternal God."

The Holy Ghost is that one of the three Persons of the Trinity that has special charge of the kingdom of God on earth. He is the Executive of the Godhead. We are to think of God the Father as sitting on the throne of the universe, scrutinizing everything which he has made. God the Son is before the throne interceding for us whom he has redeemed. There he will remain until he comes to raise the dead and judge the world. But God the Holy Ghost is in the world, representing the Father and the Son, and carrying on the work of saving the human race from sin and hell.

Everything which has ever been done in the world, since the ascension of our Lord, to spread the gospel or to save a soul, has been done by the Executive of the Godhead. If a minister preaches a sermon that carries conviction to the heart of a sinner, or consolation or strength to the heart of a saint, it is the Holy Ghost that does the work, through the human instrument. If man, woman, or child prays the prayer of faith, it is because the Holy Ghost prays through the lips of clay. If conviction is abroad in a community, so that men are thoughtful and serious, and flock to the house of prayer, and many ask, "What must I do to be saved?" it is because the Holy Ghost is abroad in the streets and homes and places of business and pleasure. If a sinner repents of his sins; if a penitent is converted; if a believer is sanctified; if a sanctified one receives a new measure of faith and power: that Divine person, whom the Bible calls the Holy Ghost,

is there, representing the Father and Son, and exercising all the power and authority of the ever-blessed Trinity. To receive the Holy Ghost is to have the Executive of the Godhead, the Third Person of the adorable Trinity, come into a man's innermost being, and dwell there, making it his throne and temple.

All that the Holy Ghost does for a man, before this, is done, so to speak, from the outside. In regeneration, or conversion, the Holy Ghost shines into the man's soul. In this second blessing, spoken of in the text, the Holy Ghost comes into the man and shines out of him into the surrounding region, making him a source of light to all who approach him.

A simple illustration will make my meaning plain. Here is a house at midnight. It is dark within, and dark all around. A man comes along the street with a lantern. He unlocks the front door, and holds his lantern so that the light shines into the house. That represents conversion. After a little, the man goes into the house with his lantern. He opens every shutter, and raises every curtain, and puts a lighted lamp at every window-pane. Now the whole house is aflame with light, and the street is so bright that men can read the time of night on the faces of their watches as they go by. That represents the blessing to which Paul referred when he said to the Ephesian Christians: "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" The Holy Ghost is God. To receive the Holy Ghost is to receive God into the soul, to live and reign there, filling our whole being with sweetness and light.

I well remember when the news came that Lee had surrendered to Grant. Every house in the village where I lived was illuminated; everybody was happy because the war was over, and the Union was saved.

I had the privilege of illuminating one of the houses. The windows had the old-fashioned little panes. I procured as many boards as there were rows of panes in all the windows, each board being as long as the distance between the window-casings. In every board I bored as many holes as there were panes in a row, and put a board at the bottom of every row of panes. Then I put a candle in every hole, and touched a burning match to every candle-wick. Thus there was a flaming light at every window-pane. In some such a way as that a man's soul is illuminated when the Holy Ghost comes in to make it his home.

The Holy Ghost is God. But we can not comprehend God. Therefore we instinctively look about us to find something terrestrial to symbolize the Celestial Spirit and his work. We enter a grist-mill. We see the stones for grinding the wheat into meal; and the bolt for turning the meal into flour. Everything is silent and motionless. A farmer comes with his grist. The miller empties the wheat into the hopper. Nothing stirs. The mill is as silent as a tomb. The miller examines the machinery; everything seems to be in perfect order. He goes down under the floor into a room full of shafts and pulleys and cog-wheels and belts. He examines all these, and pronounces them right. He lights a lamp, and descends into the dark, cold wheel-pit, where he hears the rushing water, but can find nothing wrong. He comes back, shaking his head. What is the matter, Mr. Miller? Why does not your mill grind? "I do n't know," he says. "It ought to; I can not find anything wrong." Come, let us all put our shoulders to this wheel, and see if we can not turn the stones and make them grind this man's grist.

It will not budge an inch. It 's of no use. Mr. Farmer, you must carry your grist to some other mill.

"Hold," says the miller; "I forgot something. The mill is in perfect order, but I forgot to let on the power." He seizes a lever which comes up through the floor. He pushes it downward with all his might. In an instant the stone begins to turn. Soon the whole building seems to be alive with clattering wheels and waving belts and groaning shafts. In half an hour the farmer drives away with his wagon full of bags of snowy flour. What did the miller do when he pushed down that lever. The answer is very easy. He let the water, which was roaring and foaming in the flume, down upon the wheel in the pit. Without the water, the mill, with all its intricate and costly machinery, is good for nothing.

What the water is to the mill, the Holy Ghost is to our minds and hearts. There are Churches like that silent and motionless mill. Their machinery is complete and perfect. They assemble for Divine worship in costly and magnificent temples. The music is artistic and sublime. The preaching is according to the highest standard of literary and scholastic excellence. The congregations are crowds of the most cultivated and wealthy and influential. There is not a *thing* in all the world, which a Church could wish to have, that they do not possess. And yet these Churches are doing almost nothing for God and humanity. No penitent ever finds Christ at their altars. No sinner ever receives conviction in their pews. With all their splendid and expensive machinery they grind no grist for hungry souls. Why? Because the flood-gates of Divine power have not been lifted;

because the water has not been let in upon the wheel; because the ministry and membership have not received the Holy Ghost. "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?"

Picture to yourself a beleaguered fortress and a besieging army. Yonder is a mighty rampart, built of enormous blocks of stone, held together with cement and iron clamps,—a mass of solid masonry, seventy feet high and thirty feet thick. To get into the city the besiegers must batter down that cyclopean wall. How can it be done? Look! Here is a row of enormous, hollow, iron cylinders, mounted on wheels. With these our general intends to knock down that wall. What nonsense! These things are as powerless as so many logs. But wait! Here come men lugging large bags of black sand, which they pour into the mouths of the iron tubes. What lunatics! How do they expect to batter down stone walls thirty feet thick with black sand in iron tubes? Look again! In front of each tube stand two men, lifting a heavy iron ball up to the mouth of the tube. Now they roll it in, and ram it down with a long rod.

The exact situation is this: It is proposed to batter down yonder wall with powerless iron balls, which two men can hardly lift, on top of powerless black sand, in powerless iron tubes. Evidently our general is an idiot, or he has something else to add to what he has already brought to the trenches. Look! there it is. Behind each tube stands a man with a long stick in his hand tipped with a spark of fire. At a signal from the commanding officer, each man swings his stick in the air, making a little circle of flame; and, when the word is given, he brings the burning end down upon the butt end of the iron tube, where the

ramming in of the ball has forced a little black sand up through a small hole. Instantly there is an awful explosion. The ground trembles as though an earthquake were tramping by. The very atmosphere seems to be on fire. Our ears are rent with a noise compared with which the loudest thunder would be but as the rattling of a cart. When the dense clouds of smoke have cleared away, we see a huge gap in the enemy's rampart, where a hundred balls, from a hundred guns, have struck a hundred titanic blows on a single spot.

What fire is to cannon and powder and ball, the Holy Ghost is to our bodies and minds and souls. Without fire, all the cannon and powder and ball ever made could not harm a fly. Without the Holy Ghost, all our sermons and exhortations and prayers and songs can not do the slightest injury to Satan's kingdom.

We have everything we need to take this world for Christ but the fire of God—the Holy Ghost. Why is it that, with so many churches and ministers and Sunday-schools and choirs and organs and Bibles and tracts and papers and Missionary Societies and Leagues and Conferences and Conventions and committees and resolutions, we are doing so little to batter down the strongholds of sin? Because so few of us have received the Holy Ghost since we believed. We are trying to kill the devil with powder and ball without fire. We have plenty of good cannon, and an abundance of excellent powder and shot and shell; but, in too many cases, we have no fire to touch them off. O God, send the fire of the Holy Ghost!

On the railroad track stands a locomotive, fresh from the shop where it was built. It weighs, with its

tender, nearly a hundred tons. It cost fifteen thousand dollars. It is as perfect a machine as man ever made. Its polished steel and burnished brass reflect the splendor of the sun. It is a thing of marvelous beauty and wondrous power. Man has made few things more to be admired. If ever I become an idolater, and worship a creature instead of the Creator, I shall say my prayers to a first-class American locomotive. To this machine are coupled half a score of palaces on wheels, filled with expectant travelers with their faces toward a distant city. The conductor gives the signal to start. The engineer opens the throttle. The engine does not stir. It stands as motionless as the Egyptian pyramids. What is the matter? Perhaps the machine needs to be oiled. The engineer jumps from the cab, oil-can in hand, and pours a yellow stream of lubrication into every place where there can be the slightest friction. Returning to his seat, he opens the throttle again. Nothing stirs but the bell, which the fireman rings with all his might. What can the matter be? Perhaps it is sand that is needed. The engineer pulls a lever, and a stream of sand flows out upon the rails in front of the drive-wheels. Again he jerks away at the throttle-lever; but there is no response. He says to the fireman: "Did you rub up all the brass before we tried to start?" "Yes," he answers, "I did." "Well, do it again." The faithful fireman seizes cloth and cotton-waste, and climbs out and polishes the outside and the inside of the bell, and the top of the sand-box, and the brass bands around boiler's jacket, and the reflector of the head-light, and every other piece of yellow metal which he can find. "Now I guess she will go," says the engineer. But go she will not. You might as well try to move a

mountain. What shall be done? Shall we get a lot of horses and hitch them to the engine? Perhaps if she is started, she will go. No. It would hardly be possible for all the horses in the city, pulling together, to stir the locomotive and the cars. What is such a locomotive good for? For actual service, it is worth less than a decent wheelbarrow or a respectable baby-cab. "O," says the engineer, "I have forgotten something." What have you forgotten? "The steam." The steam? That is a great thing to forget. Well, fill the boiler with water. Build a raging fire in the fire-box. Shovel in the coal without stint. Watch the steam-gauge. What is the pressure now? One hundred and fifty pounds to the square inch. That will do. Now she will go. See how she breathes! She pants like a war-horse, impatient to rush into the battle. All aboard! Get off the track! Now, engineer, we will go. His hand is already on the lever. He gives it a gentle push. With a terrific snort the iron-horse instantly responds to her driver's command. Slowly, at first, but faster and faster, the ponderous train begins to move. In a few minutes the fire-breathing monster with the flashing coaches is flying through the fields at the rate of fifty miles an hour.

What steam is to the locomotive, the Holy Ghost is to Churches and individual Christians. The engineer can do nothing with his engine till it is full of steam. God, the Supreme Engineer, can do nothing, or next to nothing, with his Church till it is filled with the Holy Ghost. The engine must tarry in the round-house till it is full of steam, till it is endued with power. Then it comes out, and is coupled to the train which it is to pull. We must tarry in our round-house, around the altar of prayer, till we are "endued with

power from on high," till we are filled with the Holy Ghost. Then we shall take the track of duty, and haul huge loads for God and humanity.

Have you not seen Churches like that cold and powerless locomotive? They have everything but what a Church needs most—steam, the Holy Ghost. At length a conviction comes over the leading members that they are not accomplishing anything for God. They have a meeting of the Official Board to talk the matter up. Different propositions are made. One says: "Let 's paint the church;" another: "Let 's put a new bell in the tower;" another: "Let 's buy a new organ;" another: "Let 's put in a steam-heating apparatus;" another: "Let 's reorganize the Epworth League;" another: "Let 's have a Church Fair;" another: "Let 's send off and get an evangelist."

Not one of those dear brethren has any conception of the real need of the Church. If I were invited to preach in that pulpit, I would take for my text, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" If the members of that Church would receive the Holy Ghost, the old bell and the old organ would answer the purpose, or new ones would be quickly procured; steam heat would not be a necessity; the Epworth League would not need to be reorganized; Church Fairs would be an abomination; and every man and woman would be a flaming evangelist, setting the whole town on fire, and turning multitudes of sinners to righteousness.

Have you not seen individual Church members like that cold and motionless locomotive? They are well born and well-bred and well-educated. They are moral and amiable and honorable. They pay liberally for the support of the Church. They are in sym-

pathy with every good work. Perhaps they have religion enough to get to heaven. But how little spiritual life and power they have! For the direct spiritual work of the Church the pastor finds them almost worthless. The difficulty is, they have not received the Holy Ghost since they believed. "Have ye received the Holy Ghost?"

If you were to receive the Holy Ghost—if the Third Person of Adorable Trinity, the Executive of the Godhead, where to come into your soul and dwell there, filling you with his blessed presence—what would be the result? There is not time for anything like a complete answer to that question. I will merely state two results. The first is Purity. The Holy Ghost is called the "Spirit of Holiness." St. Peter testified that when he and his fellow-disciples received the Holy Ghost, on the day of Pentecost, their hearts were purified by faith. There can be no sin where the Holy Ghost abides. As soon as he comes in, he drives all impurity and unrighteousness out. He will not cleanse your heart in the slow and tedious way in which the mother of a family performs her semi-annual task of house-cleaning. (Of all the weeks in the year that is the most disagreeable.) But as suddenly as a flash of lightning the Holy Ghost will drive out all pride and anger and envy and jealousy and ambition and covetousness and impatience and unbelief and lust and bitterness, and fill your heart with all the fullness of God. When you have received the Holy Ghost, you will glory in nothing save the cross of Jesus Christ; nothing will be able to provoke you to anger; no amount of praise or honor bestowed on a brother will stir up any unpleasant feeling in your breast; you will be contented to occupy the lowest

place in the Church; you will have no ambition but to do all the good you can; the sight of a contribution-box will give you real pleasure and holy delight; you will be calm and sweet in the most irritating circumstances; you will believe all the words of God without the shadow of a doubt; you will have all your appetites in perfect control; you will love all men—even your worst enemies—as you love yourself; and your heart, from being the abode of fear and care and freezing doubt, will become a heaven of calm repose and perfect trust.

The twin sister of Purity is Power. They always go together. If you want Power seek Purity too; or rather, receive the Holy Ghost, and you will have both as the necessary result. The Bible calls the Holy Ghost the Spirit of Power. When he comes into the heart, and fills it with his presence, he energizes and uses every faculty of the soul and mind and body for the accomplishment of the work which he came into the world on the day of Pentecost to perform. When you have received the Holy Ghost, you will have power to resist temptation. The devil will assail you perhaps more fiercely than ever before; but you will baffle and beat him and trample him under your feet. You will have power to stand for God and the truth everywhere. As long as the Holy Ghost dwells in your heart you can not backslide. This is the true doctrine of the "perseverance of the saints." You will have power to pray. The Holy Ghost, dwelling in your heart, will pray through your lips; and such prayer must be answered. You will have power to witness for Jesus. It will not be "ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." It will no longer be a cross to speak for your blessed

Master when his Spirit fills your heart. You will often feel so full that it will be almost impossible for you to keep from speaking. You will have power to win souls. The Holy Ghost, dwelling in your heart and shining out through every window of your soul, will enlighten and convince and convict and convert many who are in darkness and sin and spiritual death.

If all the professed disciples of Christ would receive the Holy Ghost, the whole world would soon be saved. If all the Bible Christians in America would receive the Holy Ghost, anarchy and political corruption and Sabbath-breaking and riot and rum and all outbreaking sin would disappear, and the praises of Jesus would ring from ocean to ocean and from the lakes to the gulf. If the members of this Church generally would receive the Holy Ghost, there would be a great revival, as surely as there is a God.

Who can receive the Holy Ghost? All believers; whether they belong to the ministry or the laity; whether they be men or women; whether they be learned or ignorant; whether they be high or low; whether they be old or young. In this matter, God is no respecter of persons. The great proclamation of this glorious salvation is contained in such words as these: "It shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit on all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days my Spirit, and they shall prophesy." Even little children can receive the Holy Ghost. At a New England camp-meeting, half a century ago, a ten-year-old boy was so baptized from on high that he sprang upon a stump

and began to preach with such power that scores of sinners were convicted and converted, and after that, when the Holy Ghost spoke through him, no preacher on the ground could hold a congregation. In a certain community a minister of considerable ability had been conducting a series of meetings for many weeks, aiming at the conversion of sinners, but without any results except that there was more deadness and hardness than at the beginning. What was intended to be the last meeting was drawing to a close amid universal depression and gloom, when a girl, eleven years old, sitting with her father, rose, and, under the mighty baptism of the Holy Ghost, gave such an exhortation that a score of sinners were converted that night, and the work spread all over a wide extent of country, till hundreds on hundreds found Christ precious to their souls.

What shall we do that we may receive the Holy Ghost? Confess, consecrate, pray, believe. Confess that you did not receive the Holy Ghost when you believed for the regeneration of your soul; confess that you have not received him since; confess that you believe that the reception of the Holy Ghost is a distinct blessing, bestowed once for all. Consecrate all you have to God by an irrevocable vow. Pray as Jacob did at Jabbok: "I will not let thee go except thou bless me." Believe with all your heart. Believing is like opening a door or window. Open all the doors and windows of your soul, and the Holy Ghost, like a mighy rushing wind, will come in and fill you "with all the fullness of God."

IX.

THE FULLNESS OF THE SPIRIT.

"Be filled with the Spirit."—EPH. v, 18.

THESE words are a command from God, addressed to every believer. Without question, Paul's letter to the Ephesians, from which our text is taken, was written to, and for, Christians. Therefore every converted soul, who has not already been filled with the Spirit, is commanded to be so filled. He who knowingly disobeys this command loses his justified relation with God. The Spirit here spoken of is the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Adorable Trinity. This is so evident that it needs no proof.

Very much is said in the Bible about being filled with the Spirit. In Exodus xxxi, 2 and 3, God says: "See, I have called by name Bezaleel, the son of Uri, and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship." God filled Bezaleel with the Holy Ghost, that he might have wisdom and understanding to build the tabernacle. The angel told Zacharias that John, the child that should be given to his old age, should "be filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb." We are informed in Luke i, 41, that when Mary saluted Elizabeth, the latter "was filled with the Holy Ghost." In the sixty-seventh verse of the same chapter, we are told that, at the circumcision of John, his father, Zacharias, "was

filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied." In the story of Pentecost, as related in the second chapter of Acts, we read of the disciples that "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." In the fourth chapter of Acts we have a skeleton of one of Peter's sermons. The preacher is introduced to us in these words, "Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them." In the same chapter we have a description of a primitive prayer-meeting. It was a model prayer-meeting. Every person present took part, in audible prayer. The description ends with these words: "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the Word of God with boldness." In the thirteenth chapter of Acts is given the story of Saul's encounter with Elymas, the sorcerer, and we read: "Then Saul, filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, and said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?" One of the Beatitudes is: "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled." Filled with what, do you suppose? With the Holy Ghost, to be sure. What else could be intended? In Ephesians iii, 14-21, we have an inspired prayer from the lips of Paul. It closes with this petition: "That ye might be filled with all the fullness of God." What can that mean but to be filled with the Holy Ghost? In the sixth chapter of Acts is the history of the election and ordination of the first deacons. The apostles said to the brethren: "Look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business." Ste-

phen was one of the men thus elected; and we are twice informed that he was "full of the Holy Ghost."

From these multiplied statements, and from the text, we learn that it is our privilege and duty to "be filled with the Spirit." Every one who believes the Bible at all, believes that the Book of Ephesians was written for all Christians, in all ages and lands. To every one of us, God says in the text, "Be filled with the Spirit." The Almighty is determined that we shall be "filled with the Spirit." The Christian believer who is not "filled with the Spirit" is living as far below his privilege as the valley of Chamounix is below the summit of Mont Blanc.

The question is sure to come to every mind: "What is it to be filled with the Spirit?" I think the first clause of the verse will help us to answer that question. It says: "Be not drunk with wine." Why should "be not drunk with wine" and "be filled with the Spirit" be linked together in the same verse? Manifestly because there is a similarity between the two conditions. Look at that man who is "drunk with wine." See how he acts and moves and talks. He is not himself. He is another man. He does and says what he would not do and say if he were himself. He is filled, saturated, completely controlled, by the accursed spirit of wine, that spirit of which Shakespeare said:

> "O thou invisible spirit of wine!
> If thou hast no name to be known by,
> Let me call thee devil."

Look at that man who is filled with the Holy Spirit. Observe how he acts and speaks and lives. He is not himself. He is another man. His old self

is dead. He acts and speaks and lives as once he could not. He is filled, saturated (if I may use that term) with God. He is completely under the influence of the Third Person of the Trinity, so that, so far as their moral quality is concerned, his acts, words, thoughts, and life are according to the mind and will of God. "Drunk with wine," "filled with the Spirit"—how far apart! How near together! How totally unlike! How very similar! A man who is drunk with wine is full of the devil. The man who is filled with the Spirit is full of God.

What are some of the results of being filled with the Spirit? We shall be helped to answer that question if we notice the titles given to the Third Person of the Trinity in the Holy Scriptures. Here they are. He is called "The Spirit," "the Holy Spirit," "the Holy Ghost," "the Spirit of God," "the Spirit of Christ," "the Spirit of the Father," "the Spirit of the Son," "the Comforter," "the Eternal Spirit," "the Free Spirit," "the Spirit of life," "the Spirit of light," "the Spirit of might," "the Spirit of wisdom," "the Spirit of knowledge," "the Spirit of understanding," the Spirit of counsel," "the Spirit of prophecy," "the Spirit of revelation," "the Spirit of judgment," "the Spirit of truth," "the Spirit of grace," "the Spirit of glory," "the Spirit of adoption," "the Spirit of burning," "the Spirit of holiness."

Let us analyze these titles, and see what they mean. The Spirit, the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Ghost are all one, and need no explanation. The titles, "Spirit of God," "Spirit of Christ," "Spirit of the Father," and "Spirit of the Son" mean that, in the words of our creed, the Spirit proceeds from the Father and from the Son. The relation of the First Person of the God-

head to the Second is Fatherhood. The relation of the Second Person of the Godhead to the First is Sonship. The relation of the Third Person to the other two Persons is Procession. The Holy Spirit is called the Comforter, because it is his office to comfort the people of God in their manifold trials and afflictions. He is called the Eternal Spirit because, with the other Persons of the Godhead, he is from everlasting to everlasting. He is called the Free Spirit because he breaks off from the soul the shackles of sin, and makes Satan's slave Christ's free man. He is called the Spirit of life because he is the author of all spiritual life, and perhaps we may say of all physical life. He is called the Spirit of light because he alone chases away the darkness of sin, and sheds abroad the light of truth and righteousness. He is called the Spirit of might because he gives strength to the weak, and enables those whose hearts he fills to overcome evil and do the will of God. He is called the Spirit of wisdom because he imparts to the believer a practical insight into duty and obligation. For a similar reason he is called the Spirit of knowledge, understanding, and counsel. He is called the Spirit of prophecy and revelation because he inspired the writing of the Book which we call the Bible. He is called the Spirit of judgment because he convicts wicked men of their sins, on account of which they deserve the judgment and wrath of God. He is called the Spirit of truth because his presence in the believer's heart gives him a clear insight into the truth, and an intense love of the truth. He is called the Spirit of grace because all the ability and disposition which the believer has to do the will of God comes from him. He is called the Spirit of glory because all the beauty and effulgence

of the Christian character are his gift. He is called the Spirit of adoption because he witnesses to the believer's soul the fact that he has been adopted into the Divine family. He is called the Spirit of burning because he burns all sin out of the heart, and fills it with the light of heaven and fire of love. He is called the Spirit of holiness because holiness of heart, from first to last, is his work.

One of the most beautiful titles which the Third Person of the Trinity has assumed to himself is, the "Spirit of adoption." We find it in Romans viii, 15: "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear: but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." We all know what adoption means in every-day life. Imagine to yourself an orphan boy. He is wandering about in the streets of a great city, homeless, friendless, ragged, filthy, starving. His life is so wretched and hopeless that he almost wishes himself dead. He is seriously asking himself whether he shall not end his misery by jumping from the bridge into the dark and rushing river. A kind-hearted man, who lives in a marble mansion and is immensely rich, comes upon him just as he is about to make the fatal plunge. He lifts him into his carriage, with words of pity and love, and takes him to his home. He feeds him at his own table; he clothes him in such apparel as a millionaire's child ought to wear; he makes him his son, according to the forms which the laws of the land prescribe; he teaches him to call him "father;" he educates and trains him

to be the heir to all his wealth. That is what the world calls "adoption."

Like that is what the Bible calls adoption. You, Christian, were a wandering, homeless, fatherless child—a "child of wrath"—doomed to everlasting death. God found you in your wretchedness and filth. He washed away your sins; he clothed you in the robes of righteousness; he fed you with the bread of life; he made you his child and heir; he adopted you into the family of heaven.

Now it is one of the offices of the Holy Spirit to make known to the believer the fact of his adoption. There are many Christians who do not know whether they have been adopted of God or not. But it is the privilege of all Christians to know this with absolute certainty. As the Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of adoption, one result of being "filled with the Spirit" must be the driving out of the heart of all doubt of acceptance with God, and the incoming of a clear and perfect and abiding assurance of that glorious fact. Because the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of adoption, those who are "filled with the Spirit" know beyond the shadow of a doubt, know all the time, that they are the children of God, "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ;" every hour in the day they can look up into the face of God, and say, "Abba, Father." Doubtless there are Christians, who have not been filled with the Spirit, who nevertheless have, more or less fully, the witness of the Spirit to the fact of their adoption into the Divine family. But only those who are "filled with the Spirit" have the "full assurance of faith," the abiding evidence of their acceptance with God.

Set this down, then, in your minds as one of the

results of being filled with the Spirit, an uninterrupted and positive assurance that you belong to the family of heaven. The Prince of Wales has no more positive assurance that he is heir to the throne of Great Britain, and that he will be the ruler of the greatest empire on the globe if he survives his mother, Queen Victoria, than the Christian, who is filled "with the Spirit of adoption," has that he is heir to "an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation."

The Holy Spirit is called the "Comforter" because he is in the world for the express purpose of comforting the children of God in all the sorrows and afflictions incident to this mortal life. When you are filled with the Spirit, you will be, as Paul wrote to the Corinthians, in his second letter, "filled with comfort," "exceeding joyful in all" your "tribulation."

You have no right to expect to escape trial and sorrow. This is a vale of tears through which you are traveling. The Word tells us that "we must through much tribulation enter the kingdom of God." Tribulation is a strong word. It comes from the Latin *tribulum*, which means a threshing-machine. If we are wheat, we must expect to be put through God's threshing-machine, and to be ground in God's mill, and to be kneaded by God's hands, and to be baked in God's oven, that we may become the fine bread of his kingdom. But it is God's will that you should be "exceeding joyful in all" your "tribulations."

Why is it that the happiest persons in the world are those who suffer the worst afflictions? Because they are filled with the Comforter. How could the martyrs sing in the midst of the fire? How could they

shout for joy when their flesh was being torn from their bones with red-hot pinchers? Because the Holy Ghost, whom Christ calls the Comforter, dwelt in their hearts, and filled their inmost being with his glorious presence. With one possible exception, the happiest person I ever saw was an old minister, cast off to die in the poor-house. Whenever I held service there, he always sat right in front of the pulpit, so happy that his poor, feeble body could hardly hold his soul. The last time I saw him, he lay on his cot in his little cell, more triumphant and exultant than a king on his throne. What made Father Daniels so happy? He had nothing in this world to make him happy; but everything to make him miserable. He was happy because the Comforter filled his soul. A few months ago a lady, who has grown old in the service of Christ and his Church, told me something of her earlier experience. She had two beautiful boys, her only children, whom she buried the same day. Her grief at their death was overwhelming; it seemed to her that she should die; that her heart would break. But she shut herself in her closet, and prayed that God would fill her with his Spirit. Her prayer was answered, and, a quarter of a century after, she could declare that the hour when she rode behind the hearse which bore the bodies of her little ones to the grave-yard was the brightest and best in her life. The Holy Comforter filled her soul. That explains what otherwise would be a perplexing mystery. Set this down in your mind, as the second result of being "filled with the Spirit," that the severest trials and afflictions, which this life can bring to you, will only make your interior sky more bright and cloudless and blue.

The Holy Ghost is called the Free Spirit because

he breaks off the shackles of sin, and brings the redeemed soul into the "glorious light and liberty of the sons of God." The believer who is filled with the Free Spirit is free in the highest sense of that word, for Christ says, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." There are many true Christians who do not know what perfect freedom is. They have heard Christ's great "Emancipation Proclamation," and have fled from the bondage of sin; but some of the shackles of their old bondage still hang to them. They are in bondage to fear, "the fear of man," which "bringeth a snare." They are so bound and hampered with the fear of man that they have no liberty in prayer and testimony in the house of God. It is a heavy cross for them to stand up among the people of God and declare their purpose to serve him. If they perform this duty, it is with much trembling and little satisfaction; and the unconverted who may be present are not led by their words to glorify God. Those who suffer this slavish fear of man are so fettered by it that they can not go to the man who lives across the street and warn him of his danger, and exhort him to give his heart to God. Everything which they do for Christ and his cause they do in fearfulness and trembling, goaded on by duty and conscience. They are like a man running a race for a prize with shackles on his ankles, and his hands bound behind his back.

On the other hand, when the believer is filled with the Free Spirit, all the shackles and weights and clogs are forever gone, and his soul is like an eagle which has escaped from a cage, spreading its broad pinions for a flight toward the sun. It is no longer a cross to

speak for Jesus; it is a glorious privilege. He would gladly stand on some eminence, where all the world could see and hear, and declare what God has done for his soul. If God should send, he could stand before kings and exhort them to repentance. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." When you are "filled with the Spirit," you will have perfect freedom. O, what prayer-meetings, what class-meetings, what love-feasts we should have, if all our members were filled with the "Free Spirit!" What songs, what fervent prayers, what glowing testimonies! What multitudes would be convinced of the reality of our religion, and would seek the same liberty with which the Spirit has made us free!

The Holy Ghost is called the Spirit of might. Might means strength, power. God wants all his people to be mighty, strong, powerful. There is much work to be done for God; there are many great battles to be fought; there are many strong enemies to overcome; there are many giant evils to be overthrown; the world is to be conquered for truth and righteousness. The time is gone by—if ever there was a time—for weak, puny, nerveless, flabby, spineless men and women in the army of the Lord. Again and again and again we are commanded in the Bible to be strong. It is an absolute necessity that we should be strong. Why should we not be strong? "Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary,

and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

If you will wait on the Lord, in earnest, believing prayer, he will fill you with his Spirit—the "Spirit of might"—and you will be strong to do all the work which he would have you do, and to overcome all the obstacles which stand between you and heaven. To be filled with the Spirit is to be filled with power. When you are filled with the Spirit, you will have power to overcome temptation, power to pray, power to testify, power to persuade men to give their hearts to God.

How do you account for the fact that that young lady, in the second century, who was tempted by the fear of an awful death, and by the entreaties of her friends, to sacrifice to Diana, chose Christ, and went to the stake without the least manifestation of fear, rejoicing that she was counted worthy to suffer for the truth? The answer is very easy; she was filled with the Spirit of might. How do you account for the fact that Queen Mary of Scotland feared the prayers of John Knox more than all the armies of England? Because that rugged Scotch reformer was filled with the Spirit of might. Why were three thousand souls converted under one sermon preached by Peter on the day of Pentecost? Because the preacher had just been filled with the Spirit of might. Why have such marvelous and powerful revivals broken out and swept over some communities, with apparently little human effort, while in other instances, in seemingly more favorable circumstances, the most laborious and

long-continued efforts have borne very little fruit? You need not go very far for an answer. In the former case, there were a few devoted men and women who were filled with the Spirit of might; in the latter case, those who labored depended on human wisdom and the power of man.

The Bible declares that "one" shall "chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight." When and how shall that be? When the one and the two are filled with the Spirit of might. The minister who is filled with the Spirit of might will generally have revivals wherever he goes. The class-leader who is filled with the Spirit of might will have a meeting to which the saints will delight to resort, and in which sinners will be converted to Christ. The Sunday-school teacher who is filled with the Spirit of might will, sooner or later, see all his scholars walking in the way to heaven. If the members of this Church would generally be filled with the Spirit of might, a sweeping revival would visit this community as surely as day follows night. Will you refuse the fullness of the Spirit and be babies in the family of God, or will you obey the text and be giants in the camp?

The Holy Ghost is called the Spirit of burning. Many times in the Word of God fire is used as the symbol of the Spirit. John the Baptist, prophesying of Christ, said: "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." On the day of Pentecost, when the disciples were assembled in the upper room, "there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them; and they were all filled with

the Holy Ghost." With the same thought in our minds, we sing:

"O that in me the sacred fire
Might now begin to glow;
Burn up the dross of base desire,
And make the mountains flow!

O that it now from heaven might fall,
And all my sins consume!
Come, Holy Ghost, for thee I call;
Spirit of burning, come.

Refining fire, go through my heart;
Illuminate my soul;
Scatter thy life through every part,
And sanctify the whole."

The Holy Ghost is called the Spirit of burning because, when he comes into the believing heart to abide there, he burns out, and burns up, all sin. Sin can no more exist in the heart that is filled with the Spirit, than thistledown and cobweb could exist in Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace. Some persons wonder how the Christian can be saved from all sin; how he can get rid of the corrupt and depraved nature which he has inherited from Adam. Many theologians insist that a man can not thus be saved; that righteousness and unrighteousness, light and darkness, holiness and sin, must live together in the soul as long as we are in the body. But the wonder really is how sin and corruption can escape utter annihilation when the Almighty Spirit of burning comes in and fills the soul. The wonder is not how the flames of the red-hot furnace can devour the thistle-down; the wonder is how the thistle-down can exist the thousandth part of a second in a flame which turns flint to wax

and sand to glass. No scientist would think of limiting the power of the furnace to consume the thistledown. No Christian ought to think of limiting the power of the Spirit of burning to consume the last remains of sin. We admit that sin and depravity are tremendous and awful realities, whose magnitude and enormity can not be exaggerated. But we would, at the same time, remind you that the Holy Ghost is the Almighty and Infinite Spirit of burning. Name all the forms and shades which depravity can assume in the regenerated heart, and we assure you, on the authority of God's Word, that the Spirit of burning will consume and annihilate them every one.

Since your conversion, has there lurked in the secret chambers of your soul a foul spirit of "green-eyed jealousy?" Are you inclined to be bitter and unhappy when some other person receives the honors and praises which you think should be yours? When some brother or sister in the Church is elected to an office instead of yourself, do you feel the least shadow of resentment, and are you any less ready to work for God than you were before? Do you stay away from the Lord's table, or take a back seat in the prayer-meeting, because your feelings and prejudices are not respected as you think they ought to be? That mean and hateful thing in you is jealousy. You can not take it to heaven. You ought to say to it:

> "O jealousy! thou art nurst in hell:
> Depart from hence, and therein dwell."

When you are filled with the Spirit of burning, that jealous nature of yours will utterly disappear, you will be as free from it as though you had never had it. After you have experienced the fullness of

the Spirit, you can sing in the lowest place in the choir as sweetly as in the highest; if you are expelled from the choir, you can sing just as sweetly in the congregation. Not a shadow of hell's jealousy can linger in the soul, when heaven's dove, the Holy Ghost, fills this humble temple with its hallowed presence.

Anger is another form of depravity which torments many Christians. I need not describe it; you are familiar with its hateful features. You know that God hates it. You know that it belongs to hell, and not to heaven. You could no more carry it to heaven than you could go to a wedding-feast with a rattlesnake coiled about your neck. All anger must be burned out of your heart, here and now. Before your conversion you were a slave to your angry temper. Now you have it largely in control, by the grace of God. But you often feel it rising up within, and often it gets the mastery over your will. As you yourself express it, "You are mad." You use those words as though you thought it a trifling thing to give way to the passion of anger. But the fact is, you have no more right to "get mad" than you have to swear, or lie, or steal. What would become of your soul if you should die in a fit of anger? You certainly could not enter heaven. But you tell us that you can not help feeling angry sometimes. You can not, of yourself. But when you are filled with the Spirit, he will burn out the last and least remains of that old passionate nature, and you will be as free from it as though you had never had it. At all events—not to go into the psychology of the matter—as long as you retain the fullness of the Spirit, you will have no consciousness

of the presence of any disposition to anger in your heart.

What has just been said of jealousy and anger may be said with equal truth of all other evil passions and "roots of bitterness," which remain in the soul after regeneration. When the Spirit of burning fills the heart, they will disappear, consumed by the fiery breath of the Almighty. I am aware that some Christian thinkers, who claim to be philosophers, affirm that depravity, having its root in our physical nature, must remain till we "shuffle off this mortal coil." They say that the Holy Ghost, in sanctification, represses, but does not annihilate our depravity. Well! we will not dispute about words; but we hold that when the Holy Ghost fills the soul, he burns out and exterminates all the remains of the carnal mind, so far as our consciousness is concerned, so that we seem to be perfectly clean, and God declares that we are "entirely sanctified," "holy," and "whiter than snow." Whether this "burning" be a repression of sin or its utter annihilation, this much is certain, the Bible never uses the word repression, but always uses such words as "crucify," "destroy," and "kill." Note the word "*crucify*." We are commanded to crucify "our old man." Now when a man is crucified, he dies. He may writhe upon the cross for some days; but death is sure to come at last, unless he is taken down. If we nail our old carnal nature to the cross and leave it there, it will die. The difficulty with many is, that they crucify their depravity Sunday morning, and take the old villain down Sunday night, and plaster up his wounds, and put camphor to his nose; and he lives as strong and ugly as he was before. You may say that the work of the

Holy Ghost in sanctification is repression, but I prefer to use God's words, "crucify," "destroy," "kill," "burn." Again I affirm, on the authority of the letter of God's Word, that when the Holy Spirit fills your being with his hallowed presence, he will burn out all sin and all remains of your corrupt and depraved nature.

The Holy Ghost is called the Spirit of holiness because holiness, in human character, is his work, from first to last. Holiness is positive as well as negative. It is not merely the extermination of sin and corruption from the heart. It is also the implanting and perfecting of all virtues and excellencies. Paul tells us, in his letter to the Galatians, that the works of the flesh are "adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like."

On its negative side, holiness consists in the burning out from the soul of all these things, and of all their roots, by the Spirit of burning. In the same chapter of Galatians, Paul goes on to say: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."

On its positive side, holiness is the transplanting of all these beautiful plants, from the garden of the Lord, into the garden of the soul, by the Holy Spirit, and their steady growth up into maturity under the Spirit's culture.

Holiness, both positive and negative, begins in regeneration. Whenever a soul is born of the Spirit, all the works of the flesh, enumerated by Paul, are cut off close to the roots, and consumed to ashes. At the same moment, the Heavenly Gardener, the Holy

Spirit, implants love, joy, peace, and all their kindred virtues. These begin to grow and to fill the soul with fragrance. But the old roots of bitterness soon begin to sprout. They do not kill the fruits of the Spirit, but they greatly hinder their growth. In entire sanctification, the Spirit of burning utterly consumes all the roots of bitterness, and fills the soul with pure and perfect love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance.

In the heart which is entirely sanctified—or, what is the same thing, filled with the Spirit—the graces of the Spirit are perfect, in the sense that all opposing qualities and dispositions have been expelled, and they exist in an unmixed state. They are not perfect in the sense they have reached the limit of their growth. They are just ready to grow, and, so long as the heart is filled with the Spirit, they will grow. The limit of their growth will not be reached in time, probably not in eternity. This growth is the work of the Spirit of holiness. Some foolishly imagine that growth ceases when the soul is filled with the Spirit. A greater mistake could hardly be made. If you would grow in grace, in the real meaning of the word growth; if you would grow rapidly and symmetrically up into maturity of Christian character, be filled with the Spirit. The Bible does not teach any such thing as growth *into* holiness; but it does teach growth *in* holiness. There is no growth in holiness worth the name until the soul is filled with the Spirit of holiness. When the Third Person of the Trinity comes into your soul, takes full possession and makes it his place of residence, expelling, of course, everything which is not according to his will, how rapidly you will grow in the likeness of Jesus Christ, whom the Spirit represents!

We must not dismiss this subject without saying something in answer to the question: "How may we be filled with the Spirit?" This question has been answered so many times that the subject would almost seem to be exhausted. If I were to answer the question in one word, it would be "Pray." Of course, I mean pray in faith. Jesus said: "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" The disciples prayed for the Spirit ten days.

If you will do these five things, I am sure you will soon be filled with the Spirit: First, confess to God and his people, that you have long disregarded the command of the text, and that you are determined to seek the fullness of the Spirit till you have received; second, make everything right between you and your neighbor, if there be anything which needs to be made right; third, take up every duty which you have neglected, whatever self-crucifixion it may cost; fourth, dedicate yourself to a life of absolute devotion to God; fifth, shut yourself into your closet, and tell God, on your knees, that you will not let him go till the blessing is yours. Begin now, and before the tenth day such a change will come over your religious life that your nearest friend will hardly know you.

X.

FULL SALVATION.

"Thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins."—MATT. I, 21.

NEARLY all names of persons in the Bible are significant. They have a meaning derived from some circumstance connected with the birth or early life of the persons who bore them, or descriptive of the life-mission which they were called to fulfill. For example, the great prophet who judged Israel for half a hundred years, and anointed two kings, Saul and David, was named Samuel by his mother because he had been "asked of God," and was given in answer to prayer. Samuel means, in the Hebrew tongue, "asked of God." Pharaoh's daughter named the little boy whom she found in the basket of rushes by the river's brink, Moses, which means "taken out," because she had taken him out of the water. God changed the name of the patriarch Abram to Abraham, which means "the father of a great multitude," in allusion to the prophetic fact that his seed were to become like the stars of heaven and the sand which is upon the sea-shore in number.

The text contains the most precious of all names, and also gives its meaning. A man named Joseph, of the tribe of Judah, a lineal descendant of King David, was about to marry a maiden named Mary. Before the wedding-day arrived, an angel appeared to Joseph, and foretold the birth of a son. "And," said

the same heavenly messenger, "thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins."

The word Jesus means Savior. It is the same word as the Old Testament name Joshua. Joshua is the Hebrew form; Jesus is the Greek. Joshua was the savior of his people. He saved them from temporal calamities. He saved them from enemies who would have destroyed them from off the face of the earth. He led them out of the wilderness, where they had wandered for forty years, into a land of exceeding richness and beauty, and gave them fields and cities to be their everlasting possession. They never forgot their great national deliverer.

Jesus came into the world to save the world. He was not merely a great teacher, a great reformer, a great humanitarian. He was a Savior. His very name declares the fact. He came to save his people from their sins. In this regard he stands alone. He is the only savior from sin who has ever stood upon the earth.

We might compare all who have been called saviors to physicians. Man is afflicted with a constitutional disease. Its name is sin. It manifests its presence in the moral system in surface eruptions of murder, adultery, intemperance, profanity, lying, and a hundred other tormenting disorders. Christ Jesus promises to cure the real disease, and to so thoroughly cleanse the entire system as to remove all traces of the specific complaints and local pains. The other doctors can do nothing better than to make external applications of liniments and salves, which not only do not remove the cause of the several aches and pains,

but, in many cases, actually aggravate the trouble by driving the disease in upon the vital organs.

We might make another comparison. Man has fallen from the heights of original holiness into a deep and loathsome pit. He can not get out. If left to himself, he must soon die a fearful death. Jesus and the other so-called saviors come and stand at the mouth of the pit. Each carries a rope. Each purposes to save the wretch who is, all the while, sending up agonizing cries for help from the darkness below. They proceed to the work before them. One lets down a bottle of water; another a loaf of bread; another a box of matches; another a lamp; another a tract on the evils and dangers of carelessness. These things may afford the man some slight relief for a little space. The bread will satisfy his hunger. The water will quench his thirst. The matches and lamp will dispel the darkness, and show him more clearly his wretched condition. And, if he has sufficient control over his feelings, he may while away his time, of which he has too much, by studying the tract.

Jesus now crowds his way through the ring. He grasps his rope firmly in his hands. It is large and strong. His arms are nerved with the strength of Omnipotence. What does he intend to do? Does he promise better bread, and clearer water, and a more brilliant light? No! He pulls the man out of the pit, and sets his feet on the solid rock, and makes him see the sun and breathe the air of heaven. Such is the difference between that Being to whom the angel gave the name Savior and all who have received the same title from the lips of men. They have partially saved their people from some single evil. He came to

save his people from sin, the source and root of all evil.

Notice the word *sins*. "Thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their *sins*." The angel did not say: "Thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from *hell*." Salvation from hell is all that some persons look for in the gospel of Jesus Christ. The gospel includes salvation from hell; but it is infinitely more than that.

We can conceive of the Almighty reaching the long arm of his omnipotence down into hell, and dragging out the devil, and lifting him, dripping with the slime of the bottomless pit, up into heaven, among the angels and saints. But that would not be salvation. Satan would be a lost spirit, if he were in heaven, as fully as he is now that he is in hell.

I can imagine God casting the holiest saint out of heaven, down into the lowest abyss of hell. But he would be a saved soul still. Enoch and Elijah would be saved, if they were in hell, as fully as they are now that they are in heaven. Hell would not be hell to a holy soul. Heaven would not be heaven to a sinful soul. The sulphurous flames of the infernal lake would be like a cool and fragrant breeze to a soul cleansed from all the dross of sin. The harps of God would be torture to a spirit tainted with sin. The saints are not saved because they are in heaven; they are in heaven because they are saved. The damned are not lost because they are in hell; they are in hell because they are lost. When a saved soul leaves the body, it will rise into heaven by its own lightness. When a lost soul leaves the body, it will sink into hell by its own heaviness. The only salvation is salvation from sin.

Is Jesus able thus to save? Can he perfectly save his people from their sins? Look at his name—Jesus, Savior. If he is not a perfect Savior, the angel who brought his name from heaven, or Almighty God who sent it down, made a tremendous blunder, such as you would make if you should send an empty bottle, labeled "milk," to a starving family across the street. Either believe that Jesus is able and willing to save you perfectly from sin, or stop using the name Jesus in song, or testimony, or prayer. It is blasphemy to call him, who was born at Bethlehem and crucified at Calvary, Jesus, unless you believe that he is a perfect Savior from sin.

Jesus' first act as a Savior was to atone for the sins of the world. He did not die on the cross to make God the Father love sinners, or to make him willing to save them. He suffered and died to make it possible for a God of infinite love to save a rebellious world without pulling down the pillars of the universe. If God should spare a single sinner without an adequate satisfaction rendered to Divine justice, he would dethrone himself. The majesty of the law must be maintained. This was done when the Son of God, God himself, took on him man's nature, and suffered in the sinner's stead. He took our place. He died that we might live. "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."

Tradition says that when the Roman Republic was young, a vast gulf opened in the Forum, as if to say that the meeting-place of the Roman people should be no more. The prophets and diviners, being consulted, declared that the gods forbade the gulf to

close till the most precious thing in Rome had been cast into the yawning abyss. When all men were looking at each other, wondering what that most precious thing might be, a noble young man spake out and said: "Rome's true riches are her brave men." Thus having spoken, he put on his armor, mounted his war-horse, and leaped into the gulf. No sooner was this done than the earth closed, and became solid as before. The people beheld the wonder, and cried aloud, "Curtius is the savior of Rome."

A great gulf had opened between heaven and earth, between God and sinful man. To bridge that gulf—to make it wholly cease to be—the Eternal Son of God leaped into the chasm, while all the angels shouted, "Behold the Savior of mankind!"

A certain regiment in an army had committed some breach of discipline, for which it was sentenced to suffer decimation; that is, every tenth man was to be put to death, while the rest were spared. The regiment was drawn up in line. An officer began at one end of the line, and counted off one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, *ten.* The tenth man was dragged out of the ranks, and led away to execution.

Standing side by side, far down the line, were a father and son. Running his eye swiftly along from man to man, the father saw that one of the fatal tens would fall upon his son. Instantly he resolved to save him by dying in his stead. Seizing a moment when the officers were looking the other way, he stepped back out of the line, pushed the boy one place to the right, and thrust himself into the deadly gap. A few minutes later an officer, pointing his finger at him, said "ten;" and the father joyfully gave himself up to die for one whose life was far dearer to him than

his own. This may be a poor, imperfect illustration; but, in some such a way, Jesus took our place, and died that we might be saved. "By the grace of God" he tasted death for every man. Every child of Adam, when he is born into the world, is met at the threshold of existence by "the blood of the everlasting covenant," and crosses that threshold under redemption's rainbow arch.

All mankind have been *redeemed;* but only those are *saved* who accept redemption through faith in the atoning blood. Having redeemed the race, Jesus offers pardon, forgiveness, justification, to every man. The need of justification arises from the fact that all men have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. The past of every unforgiven sinner is an immense book, bound in black. Memory is the iron clasp. When the man opens the lids and runs his eyes over the pages, he finds them black with sin. Every line is the record of some transgression against the Majesty of heaven. If he should try to count them, he would find them more in number than the hairs upon his head. The smallest is heavy enough to sink his soul in hell. The combined mass would drag him down to the lowest depth of eternal horror and despair.

What shall the sinner do? Shall he sprinkle every page with tears of contrition and penitential grief? No. If he could weep a million years, not one of those dismal stains would be washed away. Shall he make a solemn vow of future obedience to the Divine commands? No. If henceforth he could live a life of absolute perfection, that would not change the past; the black record would still stand against him without the loss of a single word. What shall he do then?

There is only one thing that he can do. Loathing

and forsaking his sins, because they are hateful to God, and making an inviolable vow of perfect and everlasting obedience, let him cast himself, by faith, on the merits and mercy of Christ. What will be the result? In an instant, Jesus, his Redeemer and Savior, will draw his bleeding hand over the foul and blotted pages, and make them, every one, as white as snow.

That act is pardon, forgiveness, justification. Use whichever term you please—they all have exactly the same meaning. If the worst sinner on earth will stop sinning, promise to sin no more, and believe in Jesus Christ as his atoning sacrifice, God will, for Jesus' sake, blot out all his transgressions, and regard and treat him as though he had never sinned.

Mark those words—*all his transgressions.* When the Savior forgives, he forgives every sin. The act of justification is a perfected act. Jesus does not forgive sins one by one. He forgives sins in the mass. He does not take away the mountain of guilt by removing one grain of sand at a time. He lifts the whole mountain all at once, and hurls it into the sea of forgetfulness in the twinkling of an eye.

Is anything further needed to constitute a perfect salvation from sin? Think what is the condition of the natural heart. It is prone to evil. It finds it easier to do wrong than to do right. It can not do the will of God. "It is enmity against God: it is not subject to the law of God; neither indeed can be." Its tendencies are all downward, away from God, into lower depths of sin and degradation. It is therefore very evident that, if the work of salvation should stop with pardon, the justified sinner would recommence at once a life of sin, and would soon run up another score as long and black and damning as the one which the

blood of Jesus had washed away. Such a salvation would be a lie and a fraud. If there were any salvation at all in such a state, it would be salvation *in* sin; certainly it is not the salvation *from* sin, which our text proclaims.

There is another step. The moment our Jesus justifies, he regenerates the sinner. The moment he forgives his sins, he takes away the love of sin. The moment he blots out the transgressions of the past, he gives strength to abstain from sin in the future. Having canceled sin, he breaks its power and sets the prisoner free. I have already given the name of this change. It is regeneration, or the new birth. We commonly call it conversion. The Christian, the regenerated man, therefore, is one whose past sins have been blotted out, and in whose heart the power of sin has been broken so completely that it has no dominion over him. He does not any longer trample on the laws of God. He does not commit sin.

The Apostle John most beautifully describes the condition of the true child of God in these words: "Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil: for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him, and he can not sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest and the children of the devil."

Notice how strong the language is: "Whosoever"—that is, every one who—"is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed"—that is, the seed of

God—"remaineth in him, and he can not sin, because he is born of God." These Divine words must not be explained away or toned down. They are so plain that it is difficult to say anything which can make their meaning more evident. We may, however, say this: "His seed," God's seed, is that new principle of life which God has planted in the soul, living and growing there, and holding the old carnal nature in subjection. The verb "is born" is in the perfect tense, and signifies that the act, expressed by the verb, was completed in past time, and that the resultant state has continued up to the present moment. "Whosoever is born of God" means every person who was born of God and now is in the regenerate state. Whosoever is *now* born of God doth not commit sin—is not now committing sin. If you are *now* committing any sinful act—if you are now doing anything which you know to be opposed to the law of God—you are not *now* born of God. God's seed—the life principle which God has implanted—remains in him who is now born of God, and so long as it remains, he can not sin.

The expression, "Whosoever is born of God can not sin," confounds and stumbles many who read the Bible. And yet there is nothing about it hard to understand. The man who is born of God is justified—God counts him just, righteous. But God can not justify a man who is committing sin. If he should, he would justify sin, and would be a sinner himself. Therefore a man can not be justified and be committing sin at the same time. A child of God can not be a child of the devil also. An honest man can not steal. That is, a man can not be honest and dishonest at the same time. A truthful man can not lie. A temperate man can not get drunk. A meek man can not

get angry. A virtuous man can not commit adultery. A man who loves his neighbor can not commit murder. A good man can not be bad. A justified man can not be condemned. A saved man can not be a sinner. A "born-of-God" man can not commit sin.

Every person who experiences justification and regeneration passes instantly into a state where, being "kept by the power of God through faith," he does not transgress any known law of God. He can say, at the threshold of that experience and every moment while he walks therein, "There is now no condemnation" to me who am "in Christ Jesus, who walks not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." If before he was a liar, now he always tells the truth; if he was a thief, now he never steals; if he was a drunkard, now he is sober; if he was passionate, now he does not get angry; whereas he was a sinner, now he delights to do the will of God.

It is a most dangerous and damnable doctrine that the regenerate children of God can, and must, keep on committing sinful acts and words every day. If that be so, how much sin can a man commit and still be a child of God? Can he murder? Can he steal? Can he break the seventh commandment? Can he get drunk? Can he swear? Can he give vent to angry passions? Can he slander his neighbor? Can he accept bribes? Can he gamble? Can he chase after the follies of Vanity Fair?

If you admit sin into the regenerate life, where are you going to draw the line? Shall it be half and half—half sin and half righteousness? Or shall it be three-quarters righteousness and one-quarter sin? Or shall it be nine-tenths righteousness and one-tenth sin?

Nay! nay! It must be all righteouness. "Ye can not serve God and mammon." "Whosoever committeth sin is the slave of sin." God is a prohibitionist. He condemns all sin, and all who sin. If you and I are this moment the children of God, we are keeping all his commandments which are known to us; we are now, by the regenerating and keeping power of our Savior, Christ, living without actual sin; Christ reigns in our hearts, his love is shed abroad in our souls, all our evil passions are under our feet, and we are free to do our Heavenly Master's will.

This is the salvation *from* sin which Jesus came to bring. Any pretended salvation which does not save *from* sin, from its power as well as its guilt, is no salvation at all. If you are living in the commission of known sin, Christ is not your Savior; for he saves his people *from* their sins. A drunkard is not saved from drunkenness if he keeps on getting drunk. A liar is not saved from lying if he keeps on telling lies. A profane swearer is not saved from profanity if he keeps on swearing. A sinner is not saved from sin if he keeps on committing actual sin, in deed or word. Salvation *from* sin is salvation from the *commission* of sin.

"But," you ask, "is it impossible for one who is in the state of regeneration to commit an act which he knows to be sinful?" By no means. There is no state of grace in this world so high that a man can not fall from it into sin and condemnation. "But what becomes of the justified and regenerated man who falls into sin?" He loses his justification and regeneration, as David did when he committed the twin crimes of adultery and murder. Had David died before he repented, he would surely have gone to hell. But the

Spirit does not immediately leave the regenerated man who falls into sin; and he will probably speedily repent and regain the favor of God. If not, he soon begins a downward slide, which, ere long, plunges him into deeper darkness than ever he knew before he sought the Lord.

But let that go. This is what I now insist upon: Jesus saves "his people from their sins" in such a sense and to such a degree that all who walk in the light of justifying and regenerating grace are kept by the power of God, so that they do not knowingly transgress any of the Divine commands. In that sense, justification and regeneration are a sinless state. Let no man say that we ignore and minify the new birth. We exalt and magnify it. It is a grand and glorious change, by which a child of the devil becomes a son of God.

Is anything more than justification and regeneration needed to make the soul's salvation perfect and complete? I will relate the experience of one of the fathers of Methodism. Soon after his conversion, while he was walking in the bright light of regenerating grace, and knew by the witness of the Spirit that he was a child of God, he became aware of the presence of evil passions in his heart. They were in subjection. They had no dominion over his soul. Christ sat on the throne in the center of his being. Yet they were alive. They gave him great annoyance. They often struggled fiercely for the mastery over his will. He was forced to keep a constant watch, and to wage a constant war, to prevent them from getting the upper hand and dragging him back into the bondage of sin.

He says: "My heart appeared to me as a small garden with a large stump of a tree in it, which had

recently been cut down level with the ground, and a little loose earth strewed over it. Seeing something shooting up, which I did not like, and attempting to pluck it up, I found the deadly remains of the carnal mind." The work of salvation was not complete in that man; he was not wholly saved from sin. He was entirely justified, and entirely regenerated; but he was not entirely purified.

He goes on with the relation of his experience. He saw that what he needed was inward holiness. He began to search the Scriptures. He found these precious words: "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean from all your filthiness, and from all your idols I will cleanse you." Then he began to call on the Lamb of God with all his might, that he would fulfill that promise in him. At length, while on his knees in prayer, the great deliverance came. Refining fire went through his heart, illuminated his soul, scattered divine life through every part, and sanctified the whole. He then received, as he most emphatically declares, the clear witness of the Spirit that the blood of Christ cleansed him from all sin. That witness was Carvosso.

George Fox, the founder of the Society of Friends, gives his testimony in these words: "I loved the Savior, and he was very precious to me. But I found something in my heart which would not be sweet, something that would not be patient, something that would not be kind. I tried what I could do to keep it down; but it was still there. Then I asked Jesus to do something for me. And when I gave him my will, he took everything out of my heart that would not be sweet and patient and kind, and shut the door."

The old stump in Carvosso's spiritual garden, the

something in George Fox's heart which would not be sweet and patient and kind, was the old Adam, the carnal mind, the depraved nature, inbred sin. The salvation which Jesus came to bring includes salvation from inbred sin. It is his plan and will to pull the old stump out of the garden of the soul; to take out from the heart everything that will not be sweet and patient and kind, and to shut the door against the entrance of everything which can not enter heaven.

Inbred sin is like a wolf. Before justification and regeneration he has complete mastery in the soul. He tears in pieces and devours every good thing which comes in his way. At conversion, the man is released. He springs to his feet, and asserts his liberty. He turns upon the wolf with the strength of God in his arms, and seizes the bloody monster by the throat. The man is master now. His mastery is complete.

But the wolf is not dead. The man has him by the throat, and must exert all his power every moment, lest his old enemy shall escape his clutch and tear him in pieces. It is a grand victory to have the wolf of inbred sin by the throat. That is the victory of justification and regeneration. But there is a greater victory still. Weary and fainting, and almost discouraged, the man cries aloud, "Jesus, help!" Jesus, the Almighty Savior, comes. With that hand which throttled the cyclone on stormy Gennesaret, with that hand which broke the adamantine bars of the kingdom of death, he strikes the wolf of inbred sin between the eyes, and crushes his skull, and kills him as dead as a stone.

That part of Christ's work of salvation is called, in the Bible, "*entire sanctification.*" Sanctification means purification. It means holiness. Holiness,

sanctification, begins with regeneration. Regeneration, conversion, is purification begun. Entire sanctification is purification completed. Every regenerated soul longs after entire sanctification. Every regenerated soul loathes the wolf of carnal passion and desire, and longs to see him dead.

This is the salvation which Jesus gives. It is not salvation from imperfection of judgment, from weakness of memory, or from infirmities of body. It is not salvation from temptations, or sorrows, or losses, or crosses, or mistakes, or involuntary deviations from the line of absolute right. It is salvation from sin. It is perfect salvation from sin. It is perfect redemption and perfect pardon and perfect regeneration and perfect sanctification.

Is Christ your perfect Savior? Is his name Jesus to you? Does he now save you from your sins? Has the hand-writing of your past transgressions been blotted out in his blood? Has a new heart been given you? Has the wolf of inbred sin been killed and cast out of your soul? If truth compels you to answer either of these questions "No," then Jesus is not yet Jesus to you.

Yonder I see a sinking ship. She has struck a rock. Her planks are stove. Her ribs are broken. The waves are dashing over her decks. The sea is pouring into her hold. Her crew and passengers are clinging to the bulwarks, and shrieking for help. Between the wreck and the shore I see a life-boat skimming the angry billows. Soon she reaches the wreck. A rope is quickly cast. Every soul is rescued. With all on board, the life-boat returns in safety to the shore.

That sinking ship is this world, wrecked by sin. We—all mankind—make up the list of passengers and

crew. The life-boat is Christ. He now lies alongside our sinking craft. He has room to hold us all. He is strong enough to bear us across the foaming billows, and land us safe on the eternal shore. We have nothing to do but to leave this shattered hulk and jump into the life-boat. Now let us forsake all our sins and leap into the arms of Jesus. His name is "Savior." "He is able to save them *to the uttermost* that come unto God by him."

XI.

SEVEN GREAT WORDS.

"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."—1 JOHN 1, 8, 9.

THERE are seven great words in this text. You can easily pick them out. Sin, He, Forgive, Cleanse, Confess, Faithful, and Just. This sermon will be an attempt to unfold the meaning of each of these terms.

The first great word is *Sin.* Sin is a tremendous and awful fact, whose existence no man will deny unless he be a willful liar or a fool. If you ask for proof of the existence of sin in the world, I point you to the wars which have been sweeping over the earth in swift succession for six thousand years. An ingenius French author, who has a passion for big figures, estimates that, since the beginning of Asiatic and European history, forty million human lives have been destroyed by war each century; and one billion two hundred million in all, a number very nearly equal to the total population of the globe at the present day.

According to the estimates of this same cunning Frenchman, if the twelve hundred million skeletons of war's victims should rise from their bloody dust, and climb one upon the shoulders of another, the ladder thus formed would reach the moon, coil about that body, and, continuing on, mount into infinite space four times as far again.

War costs money as well as blood. About seven thousand dollars must be expended to kill one man. Every year, Europe spends more than sixteen hundred million dollars in shedding her children's blood, or in getting ready to shed it; and France spends four hundred thousand dollars every day. The wars of the last hundred years have cost one hundred and forty thousand million dollars, without counting the tears, the broken hearts, the ruined homes, the frantic widows, the starving orphans.

The most obtuse man can not read a volume of ancient or modern history without seeing the word sin written all over its pages in letters of blood, shed by the red demon of war. History is all war! war! war! If you hold up the book, blood! blood! blood! seems to drip from every page. War, which is scientific murder, has been the chief occupation, industry, trade, profession, and accomplishment of mankind ever since angry Cain murdered his innocent brother, Abel. To deny the existence of sin is to deny the existence of war; it is to contradict all the history of all nations.

Ever since Noah got drunk on domestic wine, intemperance has been a world-wide and unspeakable curse. There are thirty-five millions of drunkards in the world to-day; and more than as many more are in the devil's military academy, drilling to take their places in the drunkard's army. Until you can prove that it is a virtuous and noble act for a being made in the image of God to drown his reason in the alcoholic cup, and then stab his wife, strangle his children, and cut his own throat, you must admit that sin is, and that sin is in the world.

You can not read a single issue of the daily press

and say immediately after, "There is no such thing as sin." To read the record of one day's crime would seem to be enough to make a demon sick at heart. What is it? Murders, suicides, assaults, arsons, adulteries, incests, abductions, seductions, elopements, divorces, thefts, burglaries, robberies, defalcations, bank-wreckings, body-snatchings—filth! filth! filth! sin! sin! sin! Why, man, you are a fit subject for an insane asylum if you say that there is no such thing as sin! The most undeniable fact about this world is that sin is in it, and all through it.

But where is sin? It is not in the material world. It is not in the trees, or the rocks, or the soil, or the seas, or the storms, or the climates, or the reptiles, or the beasts. It is in the human heart. It is in the universal human heart. It is in your heart, unless Almighty God has cast it out. You can not deny this Divine impeachment. I dare you to go and stand before a mirror, and to look into your own eyes, and to say, with your hand on your heart, "I have not sinned." If you say that, you deceive yourself, and the truth is not in you. If you say that you have not sinned, you make God a liar, and his Word is not in you.

The Word declares that "the Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men to see if there were any that did understand and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one." The same infallible Book affirms that "the heart"—that is, the universal heart, the heart of every man in his natural state—"is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked;" that "out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies;" that "the carnal mind is enmity against

God;" and that "all men have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Again, I say that if you say that you have not sinned, you make God a liar, and his Word is not in you. If you say that you have never sinned, you thereby brand yourself as the greatest sinner in the world.

Shall I speak of the results of sin? Three words tell the story—guilt, pollution, death. When you hear the word death, do not think of a dead body and a grave in the ground. Think of a dead soul, buried in hell, the grave of dead souls—dead souls, yet conscious, retrospective, self-condemning, remorseful, eternally cut off from hope and banished from God.

Shall I paint a symbolic picture of sin? I see a globe, this world, and twisted around it a serpent, with flaming eyes and forked tongue and venomous fangs and poisonous sting and slimy scales and deadly coils. He is a rattlesnake, an adder, and a boa-constrictor combined in one. Ever since the devil, in the form of a serpent, entered Eden, the serpent of sin has been biting and stinging and crushing the world.

As I gaze at the horrible picture, the globe becomes a heart; and that is the true symbol of sin—a serpent coiled around a human heart. That heart is yours, my friend; it is mine; it is the heart of every man, woman, and child who ever drew the breath of life. If you say that the serpent of sin has never been coiled about your heart, so tightly that no human power could tear it away, you deceive yourself, and the truth is not in you.

The second great word of the text is *He*. It is the greatest word of the text. It means Jesus Christ. What shall I say of this Name? There is enough in it for a million sermons. More books have been

written about it than about all other names combined. It is the unanimous verdict of the nineteenth century, Christians and infidels composing the jury, that Jesus Christ was the purest, the wisest, the most eloquent, the noblest, the grandest, the most God-like man who ever lived. He is revealed to us in the Gospels as a being of marvelous power. He could walk on the bosom of the storm-lashed sea as you would walk on a marble pavement. He could throttle the fiercest tornado, and calm it into instant silence, as easily as you could crush the tiniest fly. He could drive the most deadly diseases out of the bodies of the sick as quickly as you can expel the breath from your lips. He could keep breaking handfuls of bread from a single loaf till five thousand hungry men were satisfied, and then have twelve baskets of fragments left, all as easily as you would throw a handful of crumbs to a flock of sparrows. He could call back to life a man who had been dead four days with as little effort as you would put forth to wake a sleeping sentinel.

We, who believe the Bible, know why Jesus had such power. He was the very, eternal God, come down to earth in human form for the express purpose of killing the serpent of sin. Sin has great power. Christ has almighty power. Four thousand years in advance, his coming was foretold, his miraculous birth was predicted, he was called the Seed of the woman, and it was declared that he should bruise the serpent's head.

His coming and work were foreshadowed in heathen mythology. According to the Greek myth, when the strong man Hercules was an infant in his cradle, two serpents were sent by jealous Juno to destroy him. The little babe, not terrified by the sight,

boldly seized them in both his chubby hands, and squeezed them to death. Jesus, the Babe of Bethlehem, is our Hercules, our Strong Man, able to squeeze to death the twin serpents of outward and inbred sin.

Another great personage in Grecian fable was Apollo, the son of the Most High God, appearing on earth in the form of a young man of the most perfect symmetry and beauty. He conferred great benefits on humanity by slaying an enormous serpent, named Python, which was devastating the world. Christ is our Apollo, the very God, the Perfect Man, who has come to earth to slay the python of sin. He is the only being in the universe who can untwist the coils of the serpent around your heart, crush its hateful head, and deliver you from "the bitter pains of eternal death."

The third great word of the text is *Forgive.* The first thing which Jesus does for us in saving our souls is to forgive the sins which we have committed. This blessed gospel declares that "the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins."

Do you understand why we need to have our sins forgiven? Do you understand what forgiveness is? Perhaps some simple illustrations will make the matter plain. You own a farm, a homestead. You have a clear and perfect title to the property. You have a deed, signed, sealed, acknowledged, and recorded. But you get in debt. You can not, or do not, make ends meet. Month after month, and year after year, you buy goods on credit, and borrow money, of a certain man. Principal and interest increase at a fearful rate. At length your total liabilities equal your total assets. Then the crash comes. Your creditor sues and gets judgment against you. An execution is

issued against your homestead. The sheriff names a day when he will sell all you have at public auction to the highest bidder. The day arrives. A crowd of bidders are present. The sheriff puts up the walls and roof which have so long sheltered you and your loved ones, and the sacred soil on which they stand, and is on the point of knocking them off to a stranger. One minute more and you will be an outcast and a beggar. No power on earth can save you, unless your debts are paid; and you have not a penny with which to pay them. Suddenly a strange voice in the crowd shouts "Hold!" to the sheriff. At the same instant a man steps out of the throng with the words: "Stop this sale. I will satisfy this judgment. I will pay this man's debts." From a full purse he counts out gold-piece after gold-piece, till the sheriff says, "Enough." Snatching from the officer the papers which are the evidences of the debt, he tears them in pieces, and, turning to you, exclaims: "You are free! This farm is yours again, without mortgage or incumbrance of any kind!" That man is your elder brother. He went away to a foreign land before you were born. He has just returned enormously rich.

In a way somewhat like that, Jesus forgives your sins. You have, or did have, or would have if you had always done right, a heavenly inheritance, a glorious mansion of fadeless beauty, on the banks of the River of Life. But you have fallen in debt; you are overwhelmed in debt; you can never get out of debt. Your debts are the sins which you have all your life been committing against Infinite Justice. By reason of your sins your heavenly mansion has been mortgaged and sold; and, by and by, when you are evicted by death from "the earthly house of this tabernacle," you will

be compelled to move out into "the blackness of darkness forever." While you stand shuddering at this awful prospect of eternal pauperism, Christ, your Elder Brother, comes and offers to pay your debts and redeem your forfeited inheritance. Such is the forgiveness which is offered in the gospel to every sinner.

> "Ye who have sold for naught
> Your heritage above,
> Shall have it back unbought,
> The gift of Jesus' love:
> The year of Jubilee is come!
> Return, ye ransomed sinners, home."

A better illustration suggests itself. A man has committed the crime of high treason by bearing arms against the government of his country. He is seized in the very act of attempting the assassination of the head of the nation. After a fair trial he is found guilty, and is condemned to die. No power on earth can save him from the ignominious death of the halter. He must die because he has committed the highest crime known to the laws of any nation. There is, however, one man who can save the miscreant's life. While he lies in prison, dreading the awful day when he is to swing off into eternity, his gracious sovereign, whose merciful and benign government he has sought to destroy, and whose life he conspired to take, signs his pardon, and sends an officer to swing open his prison-door. He goes out as free from the law as though he had always been loyal and good.

You, my hearer, have committed the crime of high treason against the government of Heaven. Every sin you have ever committed was an act of disloyalty against the throne and person of God. You are an

insurrectionist, a rebel, a traitor. You deserve to die. The law says you shall. You are already condemned. You are in prison awaiting your execution. The death of the body is the officer who will soon come to lead you out to suffer the unending pains of the second death. If, when your body dies, one sin stands against you in the book of the Divine memory, your soul will be cast into hell. That you may escape hell and gain heaven, your sins must all be forgiven in this world. Christ, and Christ alone, has power to forgive sins. When he forgives, you are as innocent in the sight of Heaven as though you had never sinned.

During the War of the Rebellion, a private in the Union army was court-martialed for sleeping at his post. He was convicted, sentenced to death, and the day fixed for his execution. The case reached the ears of President Lincoln, and he resolved to save him. He signed a pardon, and sent it to the camp. The day came. "Suppose," thought the President, "my pardon has not reached him." The telegraph was called into requisition; but no answer could be obtained. Ordering his carriage, he rode with all speed to the front, which was only ten miles away, and reached the place just as a file of soldiers were on the point of shooting the condemned one, standing blindfolded on the edge of his grave. That is pardon; that is forgiveness; that is the way our blessed Savior steps in between us and the blazing guns of Divine justice, and saves us from the consequences of our sins.

The next great word of the text is *Cleanse*—"cleanse from all unrighteousness." If, in saving us, Jesus Christ did nothing but to forgive us our sins,

that would be no real salvation. If his power stopped with forgiveness, it would be better to leave us to perish in our sins, unforgiven. A salvation including forgiveness, but leaving out cleansing, would be a tantalization and a fraud. No glory would accrue to God and no benefit to man if Christ merely forgave our sins, and left us sinners, to keep on sinning as before.

What an act of folly it would be, on the part of the governor of the State of New York, to pardon all the thieves and forgers and burglars and blacklegs and murders in all our prisons, and turn them loose upon society without any change in their characters and dispositions! A governor who should do that would be the greatest criminal, or the greatest lunatic, in the State. Is God less just and wise than man? A pardoned murderer would be a murderer still. A pardoned thief would be a thief. A pardoned rebel would be a rebel. A sinner, merely pardoned, would be as great a sinner as he was before, and vastly more dangerous to the government of God.

These conclusions no rational mind can resist. And yet there are large bodies of Christians, so called, whose highest ideal of salvation is to have their sins forgiven from time to time, without experiencing any change of character, and keep on sinning as outrageously as before. That theory makes Christianity a vast system of licensed iniquity. It makes the Holy Trinity a board of excise commissioners, granting license to sin. It makes the difference between an ordinary sinner and a Christian to be nothing more than the difference between a murderer in prison and a murderer running at large.

That is Romanism. That is High-Churchism,

That is the religion of form. It is not Methodism. It is not Christianity. According to our text, Jesus Christ is "faithful and just to forgive us our sins, *and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*" He never forgives without cleansing.

In the process of cleansing there are two distinct acts. They are regeneration and entire sanctification. Regeneration (or conversion, as we usually call it) is cleansing begun. Entire sanctification is cleansing completed. Forgiveness and regeneration always take place at the same moment. In nature and fact they are distinct and separate; in time they can not be separated.

In regeneration our Almighty Savior recreates the soul in righteousness. He turns the currents of its thoughts and feelings and purposes, which were hellward, heavenward. He implants all the Christian graces.

> "He breaks the power of canceled sin,
> He sets the prisoner free."

Regeneration is a radical and miraculous change of character. The regenerated man's heart is so revolutionized that he hates what before he loved, and loves what before he hated. The regenerated thief is an honest man. The regenerated liar is a truthful man. The regenerated murderer is a lamb-like man. The regenerated sinner is a holy man.

But the work of cleansing is never completed in regeneration. The roots of sin remain in the regenerated man. Sinful dispositions, appetites, feelings, and tendencies are still there. They are conquered and held down by the power of Divine grace; but they continually struggle to regain the mastery which they

once enjoyed. The old Adam, the carnal nature, the giant of inbred sin, still lives in the regenerated soul. The new man, the holy nature, has come in, caught the old man by the throat and cast him down, and is trampling him in the dust. But the old man refuses to give up the ghost; he writhes and twists and strives to regain his feet. The result is an endless battle in the soul. The serpent of sin, coiled around the heart, is scotched and partially paralyzed; but is not killed and cast out. He wriggles and hisses and darts out his forked tongue, and tries to contract his broken spine.

What Christian, who hears these words, has not felt the risings of sinful passions and desires since the hour of his spiritual birth? What Christian has not been conscious of a battle in his soul between regnant righteousness and struggling depravity? What Christian has not heard the old serpent's hiss in the chambers of his secret being since he gave his heart to God?

But must this war last forever? No. If our Almighty Christ is allowed to have his way, he will come the second time and end the war. He will exterminate all sinful passions and lusts. He will kill the giant of inbred sin. He will cast out and destroy the serpent of evil. He will fill the soul with peace and love and purity and heaven. That is what Paul means when he writes to the Thessalonians: "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." That is what John meant when he said: "He is faithful and just to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Can cleansing from all unrighteousness mean anything less than has just been described? Anger, pride,

envy, jealousy, covetousness, impatience, and unbelief are unrighteousness. To cleanse is to wash out. If Christ washes out all these, can any trace of them remain? Can there be any anger, pride, envy, or any other sinful feeling in a heart which Christ has cleansed from all unrighteousness? Observe, to "forgive us our sins" is one thing; to "cleanse us from all unrighteousness" is quite another thing. Inbred, original, or birth sin, that corruption of nature which every man has inherited from Adam, is certainly unrighteousness. To cleanse is to make clean. If Christ makes us clean from inbred sin, is it not manifest that there can be no trace of inbred sin remaining?

Imagine a garment stained through and through with a crimson dye. Imagine the same garment dragged through the mire, and spattered and splashed with offal and filth. That garment represents human character. It represents the soul of an unregenerated son of Adam's fallen race. The scarlet dye represents birth sin. The mud represents the guilt of actual sin.

Christ takes up that garment, that character, that soul, and says: "I am faithful and just to forgive you your sins, and to cleanse you from all unrighteousness." Then he dips it into the fountain of his own blood, and takes it out with all the mud and filth washed away. Held up to the light, the blazing sun, shining through it, shows not the slightest speck of dirt. But the scarlet dye remains, though it looks faded and pale. That represents pardon and regeneration. Pardon removes all the mud and filth of actual transgression; and regeneration breaks the dye of inbred sin.

Again the mighty Savior plunges the garment, the soul, beneath the crimson wave, and lifts it out whiter

than snow. That second dipping represents entire sanctification. Entire sanctification washes out all the remaining stains of inbred sin. This is what the penitent and pardoned king of Israel desired when he prayed, "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."

Can any one fail to understand what cleansing from all unrighteousness is, or how it differs from pardon and regeneration? Take, as an example, the sin of anger. Here is a man who is known to all his acquaintances as a very passionate man. This sin was born in him. It seems to be ingrained in the very fiber of his soul. Under provocation he flies into a perfect fury, and, with flashing eyes and red-hot face, pours out words of gall and hate. He rages like a madman, and looks like one possessed with a devil. By and by he is convicted by the Holy Spirit, and repents of this and of all his sins. Through faith in Christ he obtains the blessings of pardon and regeneration. Now he is as innocent of the sin of anger as though he had never had an angry feeling. The power of his passionate nature is also broken, so that he preserves his serenity in circumstances which before would have thrown him completely off his balance.

But the old Adam is not dead. Under strong provocation he is conscious of a mighty flood of passion rising up in his soul. He feels like venting his sense of injury in passionate looks and words and blows. But he does not. By the grace of God in his heart, he keeps down the rising tide; he smothers his wrathful feelings, and preserves a sweet and placid exterior. That is a great victory, greater than any of the victories of Alexander or Napoleon or Grant. "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."

But there is a greater victory still. After many struggles like this, some resulting in victory and some in defeat, the man, realizing his need of salvation from inbred sin, goes to God in the deepest humiliation and the fullest surrender, and cries from the depths of his soul: "Create in me a clean heart, O God." The Omnipotent One hears that prayer. He comes the second time. He throttles the old Adam, chokes him to death and casts him out. Now the believer is cleansed from all anger. Under the most tremendous provocation he not only does not manifest anger, but he does not feel anger. His mind is as calm as a summer sky; his whole soul goes out in pity and love toward the one who has done him wrong. He is cleansed from all unrighteousness, as well as from all anger, and is filled with the perfect love of God.

All unrighteousness! Christ will cleanse you from all things which are not morally right. Pride and impatience and selfishness and unbelief and covetousness are not right. They are unrighteousness. Christ will cleanse the proudest man, so that he will become remarkable for his humility; the most impatient man, so that he will become a model of calmness and sweetness; the most selfish man, so that he will excel in forgetfulness of self; the most skeptical, so that he will become a very hero of faith; the most stingy and penurious, so that he will pour out his money for the cause of God as a fountain pours out its waters; the most sinful, so that men and angels will wonder at his saintliness.

The fifth great word of the text is *Confess.* Confession is the condition of forgiveness and cleansing. If, before the work of pardon and regeneration is wrought for and in us, we say that we have no sin to

be forgiven and to be cleansed away, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, Christ is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Confession here implies renunciation, consecration, and faith. If we deny, or excuse, or palliate, or cling to our sins, the truth is not in us, and salvation is not for us. If we say, "I am guilty; I need forgiveness. I am vile; I need to be cleansed," and then, turning our back on sin, cast ourselves alone on the merits and mercy of Christ, his blood avails to remove all our guilt, or to neutralize all the infection of inbred sin.

The sixth and seventh great words of our text are *Faithful* and *Just*. Christ is faithful. He has promised to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. He will keep his word. He is the Truth; he can not lie. Is there a man or woman who dares to call Jesus Christ a liar? Can you conceive of a greater sin than that would be? If you say that you can not be cleansed from all unrighteousness, if you doubt whether you can be cleansed from all your anger and pride and impatience and selfishness and unbelief, and every form of inbred sin, you do, in effect, call Christ a liar. O God, save this congregation from such a damning sin!

Christ is *just* to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. By his death on the cross he satisfied the claims of the Divine law, and made it lawful to save the sinner. Justice has been so satisfied that it would be unjust in Christ not to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. He must do it. He has put himself under obligation so to do.

It is said that a student, who had completed the

prescribed course in the Naval Academy at Annapolis, was being examined for graduation, and hydrostatics was the theme. The committee put this question: "Suppose your ship is in mid-ocean, and that your pump is in perfect order; you screw a hose, also in perfect order, to the pump, and throw the end of the hose over into the sea; then you work your pump, but get no water. What would you think was the matter?" "I should think that the pump was out of order," said the student. "No," said the committeeman, "the supposition is that the pump and hose are in perfect order, and that all the connections are perfectly made. What would you do in that case?" "I should run to the edge of the deck, and look over the side of the ship and see if the ocean was not dry," was the young man's reply.

If, confessing and forsaking all your sins, you come to God in the name of Christ, and sue for pardon, or perfect cleansing, and do not receive, you may be sure that the ocean of Divine love and power is dry; that God has ceased to be. As true as there is a God, who can not lie, you shall have your sins forgiven; you shall be cleansed from all unrighteousness.

XII.

CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

"Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect. . . . Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded."—PHIL. III, 12 AND 15.

IN these two verses we seem to hear Paul contradicting Paul. In the first sentence he says: "Not as though I were already perfect." In the second sentence he says: "Let us, as many as be perfect, be thus minded." In his first utterance he disclaims perfection for himself. In the second, he claims membership among them who are perfect. He does the same as to say, almost in the same breath, "I am not perfect; I am perfect." How shall we make Paul agree with Paul? Surely there can be no real contradiction between two statements of the same apostle, speaking under the influence of the Holy Ghost. It is not difficult to harmonize these seemingly discordant sentences. Each is the truth in part. Together they are the whole truth on this important theme. Paul was both imperfect and perfect. In one sense of the term, he had perfection already; in another sense, he neither had it then, nor expected ever to have it in this life.

Like Paul's experience, essentially, ought to be the experience of every disciple of Jesus Christ. There is a sense in which no Christian can be perfect. There is another sense in which every Christian may and ought to be perfect. The chief aim of this discourse will be to show what Scriptural perfection is not, and what it is.

But let us first be sure that there is such a thing as perfection for mortals here in the flesh. To inform ourselves on this point, we will not go to the creeds, or the councils, or theologians, but to the Word of God. Opening the Book, we read: "Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God." "There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; that man was perfect and upright, one that feared God, and eschewed evil." "Mark the perfect man and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace." The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews thus exhorts those to whom the Divine Spirit moved him to write: "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ." St. James says: "Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." To the Corinthians, Paul writes: "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." To the Colossians he declares: "We preach Christ, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." To his spiritual son Timothy he states the great end of Divine revelation in these words: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." And the Great Preacher closes one of the heads of his sublime "Ser-

mon on the Mount" with these words: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

These are but a few of a multitude of similar passages scattered through the Book of God. By them we are informed that there have been perfect men; we are urged to seek perfection for ourselves; we are told that the Holy Scriptures have been given to make us perfect; we are taught that the gospel ministry was established that every Christian might become perfect; and we are all commanded, by the great Head of the Church, to be perfect.

Let no man say that there is no such thing as perfection. On that point there can be no question. We can and must be perfect. The only question is, What is the nature of the perfection to which we can attain? Manifestly it is not absolute perfection. Such perfection belongs to God alone. No man, no angel, ever had, or ever will have, absolute perfection. God is the only being in the universe who is absolutely perfect. In his character resides every possible excellence, in an infinite degree. He is so perfect that no one of his attributes can ever be increased. On the other hand, no human spirit in the heavenly state will ever be so perfect but that it will look forward to an unlimited growth in knowledge, holiness, and power. While God's holiness remains stationary, it will be eternally approached, but never equaled, by the perfection of the saints.

Our perfection is not angelic perfection. Angels never were men. Men will never be angels. However it may be in the world to come, in this life we shall never equal those spotless and refulgent beings who stand before the throne of God, or fly forth at his

command to minister unto those who shall be heirs of salvation. While we would not exchange places with the angels, for they know nothing of the joys of redemption, yet we must confess ourselves their inferiors in the kind and degree of perfection to which we can attain in this lower world.

Our perfection is not Adamic perfection. Adam in Eden had never sinned; his moral powers had not been weakened by vicious indulgences and depraved habits; his spiritual vision had not been clouded by the vapors which rise from corrupted affections; there were no scars of old transgressions on his conscience, no memories of former iniquities on his mind; he did not live among wicked men, nor in a sin-cursed world. Therefore he stood on a peak of perfection which we can not climb till mortality is swallowed up of life. It is evident that we, living in a world of sin, with bodies disfigured by disease, and minds deranged by centuries of ancestral ignorance, superstition, and vice, can not equal the perfection of that being whom God had just created in his own image and likeness.

Instead of being absolute, angelic, or Adamic, our perfection must be finite, human, and Christian. It is finite—the perfection of creatures infinitely less than the Creator, who were made to grow through time and eternity. It is human—the perfection of immortal beings living in mortal bodies, subject to all the limitations and restrictions of this earthly probation. It is Christian—the perfection of sinful beings redeemed and saved by the blood of the Incarnate God.

In talking about perfection, it will be well for us to understand what the word itself means. It has no reference to size, quantity, rank, or value, but only to completeness. If I tell you that a thing is perfect, I

do not necessarily say anything about its size, whether it is large or small; about its rank, whether it is high or low; about its value, whether it is precious or worthless. A thing is perfect which lacks nothing belonging to its nature or kind. A drop of dew, hanging on the point of a leaf in the forest, is as perfect as the ocean. It is not so large; you can not sail your ships upon it; you can not catch whales in it; and yet the dew-drop is as perfect as the ocean. A pebble may be as perfect as a diamond. It is not so beautiful; it is not so precious. You can not buy as many acres of land with a pocketful of pebbles as with a pocketful of diamonds; and yet the pebble is as perfect as the diamond. An infant, a few hours old, is as perfect a specimen of humanity as a full-grown man. He is not so large; he is not so strong; he can not think so great thoughts or perform so great deeds; he is not worth so much to society, or to God; but the babe is just as perfect as the man. Unfallen Adam was as perfect in his sphere as the angels in theirs, or God in his. He was not a perfect God or a perfect angel, but a perfect man. In this life we shall never be as perfect as Adam, but we can all be Christians, and, by the grace of God, we can be perfect Christians.

It is Christian perfection about which we speak. But let us come a little nearer to the subject, and ask: What is Christian perfection? What is it not? It is not perfection of knowledge. Neither in this life nor in the life to come shall we know all things. God alone is perfect in knowledge. All created intelligence will always have something to learn. Earth is a preparatory school; heaven will be a university in which the redeemed will pursue an endless course of study under the tuition of the angels and of God. There are ten

thousand things which the most perfect Christian does not know, which God is teaching to him as fast as his feeble mind can grasp and retain. This is the way in which the perfect Christian grows.

Christian perfection is not perfection of judgment. Perhaps angels and glorified human spirits have perfect judgments; certainly no mortal man can have. The perfect Christian may have a most imperfect judgment, and so may make a hundred blunders and do a hundred unwise things in a single day. Soundness of judgment comes from experience and native mental force, not from a pious heart.

Christian perfection is not perfection of reason, memory, or taste. A perfect Christian may have feeble reasoning powers, a weak memory, and the poorest taste. As a consequence, many of his opinions may be unsound, he may sometimes fail to meet all his engagements, and his dress and manners may not charm and attract. God may write him a perfect Christian, nevertheless.

Christian perfection does not mean exemption from temptation. The holiest souls are tempted to sin. Our blessed Redeemer, who was absolutely sinless and spotlessly holy, was subjected to the most prolonged and terrific assaults of Satan and his confederate fiends. One of his battles with the powers of hell lasted forty days. The devil did not desist from tempting the eternal Son of God till he had expired upon the cross. Jesus was "tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin." The more like Jesus we become, the more the Prince of Darkness will try to harass and destroy. If he lets any mortal alone, it is the iron-bound slave of sin or the Church member

who is content with the form of godliness without its power.

Christian perfection is not impeccability. The perfect Christian is not the man who can not sin. No man on this side the grave will ever reach a point in holiness so high that he can not fall. The holiest soul will plunge into sin in a second if his faith lets go its grip on Christ. Adam and Eve, before the fall, had a degree and kind of perfection which will never be ours on this side the flood; yet they yielded to temptation, and sunk into sin and shame in a single hour. From the highest peak of the snow-clad mountains of holiness to the bottom of the black valley of condemnation and guilt is but a single step. To the perfect Christian the Divine warning comes: "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall!"

Christian perfection is not perfection of temperament. By temperament we mean "the peculiar physical and mental character of an individual, arising from the relations and proportions between the constituent parts of the body." We recognize four pure temperaments—the sanguine, bilious, nervous, and lymphatic, and any number of mixtures of these. Which pure temperament, or what mixture of temperaments, the ideal man would have depends entirely upon what our ideal is. But of this we are sure, no possible measure of Divine grace in the heart will ever change a man's temperament. Though it will modify, restrain, improve, and stimulate, religion will leave every individual's temperament essentially the same as at the beginning. The sinner of a sanguine temperament will become the most hopeful and enthusiastic, but not the most steadfast, of the saints. The sinner of a

bilious temperament will become the most vigorous and determined, but not the most hopeful. The sinner whose temperament is nervous, when converted and advanced to the higher walks of religious experience, will surpass his brethren in the calmness of his faith and the sweetness of his temper, but not in boldness and decision. The lymphatic sinner, when transformed into a saint, will excel in coolness and patience, but not in energy and enthusiasm. It would be folly to suppose that any degree of religious uplifting would make the lymphatic man sanguine, or the bilious nervous. When John gets the blessing of Christian perfection, he will be John still; Peter will be Peter; Thomas will be Thomas. But John will be more courageous; Peter will be more steadfast; Thomas will be more hopeful. Yet if John and Peter and Thomas and the others slide back into sin, all their old defects and deficiencies will reappear in their original sharpness and ugliness, because Divine grace never has changed, and never can change, a man's temperament.

What, then, is Christian perfection? It is perfect purity and sincerity of intention. This is one of John Wesley's definitions. He says: "In one view, Christian perfection is purity of intention, dedicating all the life to God." The perfect Christian is one whose heart has been so thoroughly transformed by the power of the Holy Ghost that it is his most earnest desire and his sincerest intention to do and be exactly right in everything and at every time. However much he may fall below the standard of absolute legal perfection, his intention is to come short in nothing. He would rather die than commit the smallest sin.

Christian perfection is the complete subjection of

the human will to the will of God. The natural man is a rebel against Heaven, because he will be. His rebellion is in his will. He will not do the will of God. The perfect Christian is the same man after his will has made an absolute and unconditional surrender to the will of God, and God has accepted the surrender. The perfect Christian has no will but to do the will of God. "Thy will, O God, be done," is the constant language of his heart. He has sunk down into the will of God, and found it inexpressibly sweet. There he lies as contented and restful and careless as a weary laborer on a bed of down, or a little babe on its mother's bosom. God can give him no command, however painful to the flesh, but his whole soul joyfully exclaims, "I delight to do thy will, O my God!" He is willing that God should do anything with him, for he has the blissful assurance that he can do nothing that will not be perfectly wise and good. The old theologians used to say that a man was not fit to go to heaven till he was willing, for God's glory, to go to hell. We do not accept that. But the perfect Christian would not object to going to hell, if that were God's will; for it could not be otherwise than that God would go with him, and his smiles of love would make the lowest hell like the highest heaven. Inasmuch as to be a sinner is to have the will opposed to God, to be a perfect Christian is to have the will in perfect subjection to the will of Heaven. John Fletcher says: "Christian perfection extends chiefly to the will, which is the capital moral power of the soul, leaving the understanding ignorant of ten thousand things, and the body dead because of sin."

Christian perfection means perfect salvation from sin. Our blessed Redeemer was named Jesus before

his birth, because he was coming "to save his people from their sins." He did not shed his blood merely to save us from the hell into which sin would have plunged us, or from the guilt and power of sin, but from sin itself. Salvation from hell would be a great salvation. Salvation from the guilt of sin would be greater. Salvation from the power of sin would be greater still. Salvation from sin is the greatest of all; it is perfect salvation. It is Christian perfection: it is what the Bible holds out to every soul, and commands every one to seek.

How strangely men have erred at this very point! One expects to be saved from hell while covered all over with the guilt of sin. Another, who is the slave of sin, and sins every day, expects to get to heaven by having his sins forgiven from time to time. A third, who has experienced pardon for the past, and in whom the power of sin has been broken, but who does every day what he knows to be wrong, calls that salvation, and dreams of heaven. That is not the salvation of the gospel. Gospel salvation is salvation from sin. Gospel perfection is salvation from all sin.

Salvation from sin includes two particulars: One is salvation from the commission of outward acts of sin; the other is salvation from sinful tempers and tendencies—from inbred sin. Some tell us that such a salvation is impossible. They would have us believe that the highest state of grace attainable in this life is that in which the Christian wages a perpetual warfare with a host of rampant lusts in his own heart, and is beaten and dragged into sinful acts and words every day. They think they see the great masterpiece of Christ's saving power in the seventh chapter of Romans, painted in words like these: "I am carnal,

sold under sin. For that which I do, I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that I do. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!" They would have the child of God forever sitting on the stool of repentance, beating his breast, and moaning out the publican's prayer, "God be merciful to me, a sinner." When they bear witness to the power of our glorious gospel, in the congregation of the Lord, they use such words as these: "I am a poor sinner. If God should treat me as I deserve, he would hurl me into hell this minute. Not a day passes over my head but I break his holy commandments, and sin against him in thought, word, and deed. But I hope to persevere in this way and get to heaven at last."

Is this that glorious salvation which was heralded by a long line of holy prophets, which was introduced by the music of angel choirs, which required the stupendous miracle of the incarnation, and which cost the unspeakable agonies of Gethsemane and Calvary? Is this all God can do for a ransomed soul, through the blood of his Son and the power of his Omnipotent Spirit? Did the dying Christ cry, "It is finished," that the sinner might get no farther than to cry, "O wretched man that I am?"

Away with such a thought! The Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, is against such degraded views of the power of the gospel. To his ancient Church, God said: "Be ye holy: for I the Lord your God am holy." Through one of his old prophets he made this promise to all his people: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put

within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, at the naming of his son, being filled with the Holy Ghost, uttered these words: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, . . . to remember the oath which he sware unto our father Abraham, that he would grant unto us, that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies [that means spiritual enemies] might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life." Saint John says: "Ye know that he [Christ] was manifested to take away our sins. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. Little children, let not man deceive you; he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil. For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." Again he says: "He that hath this hope in him [that is, the hope of heavenly glory] purifieth himself even as he [God] is pure." Once more he says: "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." To the Thessalonians, Paul writes: "This is the will of God, even your sanctification." In the same letter he utters this wonderful prayer: "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be pre-

served blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Then he adds, "Faithful he is that calleth you, who also will do it."

If we hold that it is impossible for any man to live without committing sin, we must accept two other conclusions: *first*, God is an infinite tyrant; for he commands us, on pain of eternal death, to do what he knows we can not do; and, *second*, the devil is more than a match for Christ, for the former will not permit the latter wholly to save his people from their sins, although he came to earth and gave up his life for that very purpose. We can not accept either of these absurd conclusions. We believe that God is able and willing to give us so much of the power of his Spirit that we can live all our days without coming under the condemnation of sin. No Christian ever was in the seventh chapter of Romans. That is the foul prison-house of condemned and guilty rebels; not the mansion of the sons of God. Every Christian is invited to make the eighth chapter his permanent home, and, standing under its great central dome, in the full light of the Sun of righteousness, ever more exclaim: "There is now no condemnation to me who am in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit!"

All the texts which we have been quoting, and scores of others like them, promise more than salvation from the commission of actual, outward sin; they promise a deliverance from that in which sinful words and acts have their birth—inbred sin. Let me repeat two passages: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." "And I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto

the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." When the child of God has been cleansed from all unrighteousness, and wholly sanctified throughout spirit, soul, and body, it is manifest that there can be no remains of pride, or anger, or selfishness, or covetousness, or unbelief, or any other evil passion or desire in the heart. Christian perfection therefore means the utter extermination of all these roots of bitterness, so that the sanctified soul feels no more uprising of sin, but only good desires and holy longings and heavenward aspirations. Having no desire or inclination to sin, his life is free from both inward and outward sin, being "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation."

"But," says some objector, "does the perfect Christian never do or say anything which God can not approve, and which is not absolutely good and right?" That we have not asserted. The perfect Christian has many infirmities of body and mind, and makes many mistakes through the imperfection of his knowledge and the weakness of his judgment and memory. But infirmities and mistakes are not sins. The failure to recognize the distinction between infirmities and sins is the cause of much of the perplexity which exists in the minds of many good people in regard to the doctrine of Christian perfection. Some make no distinction, except in degree, between falling asleep in church and forging a note; both are sins, according to their definition. Paul knew the difference. He says, "I glory in mine infirmities." Did he glory in his sins? "The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities." Does the Holy Spirit help our sins?

A sin is a voluntary transgression of a known law. An infirmity is an involuntary deviation from a per-

fect standard imperfectly understood. Sins always spring from a bad heart. Infirmities have their ground in a disordered physical and intellectual nature. Sins always produce guilt and condemnation. Infirmities, when discovered, cause humiliation and regret. Sin is perfectly curable in this life. Infirmities must be endured till "mortality is swallowed up of life."

This was the opinion of John Wesley. He says: "Not only sin properly so called—that is, a voluntary transgression of a known law—but sin improperly so called—that is, an involuntary transgression of a Divine law, known or unknown—needs the atoning blood. I believe there is no such perfection in this life as excludes these involuntary transgressions, which I apprehend to be naturally consequent on the ignorances and mistakes inseparable from mortality. Therefore, sinless perfection is a phrase I never use, lest I should seem to contradict myself." Because this is true, it is right and proper that the holiest souls should daily pray, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."

There is a form of speech used by St. Paul which proclaims the Christian's privilege in the most unmistakable terms. It is, "Dead to sin." In the sixth chapter of Romans he says: "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein? . . . For he that is dead is freed from sin. . . . Likewise reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." To "reckon" is a mathematical operation. This is the most blessed branch of mathematical science that man ever studied. "Reckon yourselves to be dead unto sin." This is "pure mathematics."

I think you all have some understanding of what it would be to be dead to sin. Take the expression, "Dead to music." Here is a young lady who has given many years to the study and practice of music. She has graduated from the best musical conservatory in the world. She is a skillful performer upon the piano and many other instruments. She sings with a highly cultivated voice. She reads all the leading musical journals. Calling at her home, you ask her to favor you with a piece of music on the piano. She looks solemnly into your face, and answers, "I am dead to music now." You would understand those words to mean that she has nothing more to do with the study or practice of music; she does not play, she does not sing, she does not read upon that subject, she has nothing more to do with music in any way. "Dead to music." You know what that means.

God says, "Dead to sin." To be dead to sin is to have nothing more to do with sin than the inhabitants of yonder cemetery have to do with the life which rushes along the street past the graveyard gate. If sin be regarded as an act, to be dead to sin is not to do that act. If sin be regarded as a state of the heart, out of which sinful acts proceed, to be dead to sin is not to be in that state. "The old man is crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed."

If I hold a stone above the earth, and then let it go, it falls to the ground, drawn down by the unresisted power of gravitation. That represents the unregenerate sinner; all his tendencies are downward into sin and hell. If I give the stone an upward impulsion, it flies away from the earth up toward the sun. Yet the earth pulls hard upon it, and the force which would draw it down is almost as strong as that which

urges it along its upward course. It goes up indeed; but against a mighty downward attraction which the globe exerts upon its every atom. That represents the imperfect Christian—the soul which has been regenerated, but not entirely sanctified. If now I could impart sufficient momentum to the stone to carry it beyond a certain point, the earth would lose all its power to attract, and, gravitation having turned the other way, it would fly on toward the sun with ever increasing speed and power. That would represent the perfect Christian. He has reached a point where gravitation turns the other way. Sin being cast out of his heart, the world has no power to attract. All his tendencies are toward God and heaven, and loftier heights of purity and power. He tabernacles for a time in a gross and mortal body, and is beset by manifold temptations and infirmities; but his soul is so completely delivered from the love of sin, and from its power and inward presence, that if he should be instantly translated into a world of perfect light and knowledge, he would appear before God "without spot or wrinkle or any such thing," able to render a more perfect service than Adam in Eden.

Lastly—only to be named for lack of time—*Christian perfection is perfect love.* Love is the fulfillment of the law. Love is the bond of perfectness. To love God with *all the heart* is all that he can require, and nothing less can he accept. Wesley says: "Scripture perfection is pure love filling the heart, and governing all the words and actions." If this wall of the Church were a blackboard, and with a crayon I should write upon it words telling all the duties which you owe to yourself, to your fellows, and to God, covering all the board but a narrow band at the right,

I might make a brace and the sign of equality, and write after it the little word "Love," and that one word would mean as much as all that I had written. Nay, were the canopy of heaven a blackboard, and had I an archangel's pinions and a pen dipped in living light, I could cover it with words telling what you ought to do to please God and keep his law, and then the one little word "Love" would equal all I had written. If any man says that Christian perfection is anything more, or anything less, than perfect love, he errs.

Christian perfection is the gift of God, promised to all who hunger and thirst after righteousness. It is to be had *now* by all regenerated persons, in a moment of time, by simple faith.

Some one objects: "If I am made perfect, how can I grow; and I am commanded to grow in grace?" You entirely mistake the meaning of the words. Perfection is not the end of growth, but rather its beginning. Does the farmer who has ninety and nine perfect lambs, and one wretched, little, scrawny creature, mourn because the ninety and nine can not grow, and wish that they had been born imperfect like the one? Does the orchard-man dote on the imperfect apples hanging on his trees, and wish all were imperfect that they might grow? No; in grace, as all through nature, perfection is the beginning and chief condition of rapid and substantial growth. If you will let God perfect you in love, you will grow in grace, the coming quarter, more than you have grown in the years since your conversion.

What you call perfection is maturity. We reach maturity by a gradual growth. We are made perfect in love in a moment, that we may grow up into the

maturity of all the Christian graces. The perfect apple grows up into all the maturity and ripeness of which its nature is capable.

Let us seek Christian perfection that we may grow up into Christ in all things. When the weeds of sin have all been expelled from our hearts, there will be nothing to hinder the growth of the Christian virtues.

XIII.

ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION.

"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it."—1 THESSALONIANS, v, 23, 24.

THE first declaration which this text makes to our understanding is this: "There is such a thing as entire sanctification." Sanctification is a great word. Some persons have stumbled over it, and fallen into confusion and doubt. Some have tried to utter it, and it has stuck fast in their throats. To others it has seemed like a lofty and impassable mountain, and they have gone around its base. But the fact stands out clearly before our mental vision that there is such a state as sanctification—entire sanctification; and that it is for man. If you should say, "No, there is no such a thing," it would still be. If the Church universal should forget it, and blot it from her prayers and creeds, it would still be. If the ministry should conspire to obscure and hide it in all their pulpit ministrations and private instructions, it would still be. If, on an exhaustive examination, it should be found that not one man or woman in all the world ever had any experimental knowledge of such a state, and that all who have ever professed it were hypocrites or fools, it would nevertheless be. If the very angels who throng around the dazzling throne of Infinite Wisdom and Power, should come down to earth and preach the doctrine of *no sanctification,* it would be

after all. It would be, because it is here in God's Word—that Word which is above philosophy, above creeds, above Churches, above ministers, above human experience, above angels, above cherubim and seraphim, above everything on earth and in heaven. There is such a state as sanctification—entire sanctification. That sanctification is for man; for Paul prayed that men might have it; and he, an inspired apostle, would not have prayed for that which could not be.

Before we take another step forward in this discussion, we must ask, "What is sanctification?" A sufficiently full and accurate definition, for the present, is that which our Catechism gives: "Sanctification is that act of Divine grace whereby we are made holy." Entire sanctification, then, is that act of Divine grace whereby we are made *entirely* holy; or it is that state of grace in which we are entirely holy.

All Christian thinkers agree that entire sanctification—perfect holiness—is absolutely essential as a condition of admission to heaven. Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Lutherans, Episcopalians, Baptists, Disciples, Unitarians, Quakers, Roman Catholics, and Methodists perfectly agree, and stoutly maintain, that no soul can ever enter the New Jerusalem till it has been sanctified wholly, and made every whit clean. There is absolutely no difference in the creeds of Christendom in this regard. Every religious teacher that ever lived, whatever his denominational brand, could he speak to you on this subject, would say: "Somewhere, between the present and the threshold of the palace of God, you must experience the blessing of entire sanctification. Without that kind and degree of holiness no man can see the Lord."

If you ask, "When may I expect to experience entire sanctification?" you will receive four distinct answers. There are four theories concerning the time when the soul may be made whiter than snow. The Church of Rome places the time after death. Rome teaches that there have been a very few souls, of a peculiar fineness, who have attained perfect holiness in this life, and have gone through the gate of death directly into paradise. But the great mass, including an immense majority of her popes, cardinals, bishops, priests, monks, and nuns, must tarry in purgatory a longer or shorter period of time, and there experience perfect cleansing through the action of fire or some other tormenting agent. To her votaries, who long to be saved from all sin, Rome says: "Wait till you are dead, and then the flames of purgatory will burn out the stains of sin and the roots of carnality, so that you can enter into the presence of God." There is no need that I should argue against this old heathen dogma in the presence of a congregation of Protestants.

The second theory places entire sanctification in the very article of death. Almost all theologians of the Calvinistic school tell us that, so fierce are the temptations that beset us in this life, and so deep have the roots of depravity struck themselves into the very core of our being, and so strong is the devil, Christ can not cleanse us from all our sins till, standing on the threshold of this clay tenement, we are in the very act of spreading the wings of our souls for a flight into the eternal world. They tell us that we must fight against the old Adam within us as long as we live in the flesh, and not look for deliverance till death comes to kill our foe. The arrow which drinks our

heart's blood will, at the same time, slay the serpent of evil coiled about the soul. These teachers do not put entire sanctification just before death, or just after death, but in death itself. I will not now undertake to show the falsity of this theory. I will merely remark, in passing, that it seems to make death our savior, instead of Jesus Christ.

The third theory is at the other extreme. It locates entire sanctification in the act of pardon and regeneration. The supporters of this doctrine, commonly called "Zinzendorfism," tell us that God never does anything at the halves; that when he, for Christ's sake, forgives a man his sins, and gives him a new heart, he, at the same instant, cleanses him from all sin, utterly exterminates the old Adam—the carnal mind—and perfects the soul in love. One tremendous objection to this theory is the experience of all truly regenerate persons. We all know that the old nature did not die in us at our conversion, for we have felt its motions in our souls a hundred times since that day.

Only one possible theory remains. It is the theory of Methodism. It is the theory of Paul. It is the theory of the Bible as a whole. It is the truth of God. It says to the believer: "You were not wholly sanctified at your conversion. You need not wait to be wholly sanctified in the article of death. You may have that great blessing at any time between regeneration and death. You may be wholly sanctified now. Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation."

Why do we believe that entire sanctification is a definite work of grace, subsequent to conversion and distinct therefrom? Because Paul, in the text, writes to Christians—to converted persons—and says: "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly." If regener-

ation and entire sanctification took place at the same time, it would be the height of folly and stupidity thus to pray.

Does any one doubt that Paul was praying for the entire sanctification of regenerate persons? Hear how he begins this First Epistle to the Thessalonians: "Paul and Silvanus and Timotheus, unto the Church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father; knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance. And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost: so that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak anything." Further on he writes: "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe." Again he says: "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory

and joy." Finally he writes: "Ye are all the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness."

What shall we say of these persons? They belong to the true Church—the Church which is in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. They are distinguished for their works of faith and labors of love. They are the elect. They are followers of the apostles and of Christ, and examples of Christian living to other Churches. They have joy in the Holy Ghost. They are Paul's hope and joy and glory and crown. And, lastly, they are all children of the light. Surely they are genuine Christians. They are converted men and women. There is no room for the shadow of a doubt in regard to this matter. To apply such terms to unconverted sinners would be the most reckless abuse of language—such an abuse as would stamp the user with the brand of imposture, if he should claim the gift of inspiration. We know that Paul is addressing those who have been soundly and thoroughly converted, and who are eminent for their piety and devotion. They are not those who once enjoyed the smiles of Heaven, but have grown cold and have backslidden from God. They are living, ardent, growing Christians. They are walking in the light. To them, and to all who are like them, Paul says, lifting his heart to Heaven in earnest prayer: "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly: and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he who calleth you, who also will do it."

Therefore regeneration and entire sanctification are distinct in fact and in time. The Thessalonians were not entirely sanctified at their conversion. No

person gets it all at once. For every one who is born again there is a second blessing—a higher, a deeper, a richer blessing—a distinct work of grace, wrought in the soul by the power of Almighty God.

How do we know that it is not God's will that we should wait for entire sanctification till the hour and article of death? We know absolutely from the text. If there were nothing else on the subject between the lids of the Bible, this would be enough: "I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto [or, as the Greek has it, at] the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." He prays that the whole spirit and soul and body of all those Thessalonians be made blameless, or wholly sanctified, now, and then be kept in that state, by the same Divine power, till death or the end of the world. He does not pray that his young converts at Thessalonica may be entirely sanctified just as their souls are about to quit this clay tabernacle; but that the very God of peace will sanctify them wholly now, and their whole spirit and soul and body may be preserved *blameless* through all the years of toil and conflict that may lie between the present moment and the end.

Evidently Paul was a Wesleyan in his theology, and not a Zinzendorfian or a Calvinist. Had he been a Zinzendorfian, he would have written: "I thank God that ye were entirely sanctified at the hour of your conversion, and I pray that ye may be preserved in that blameless state into which ye then entered." Had he been a Calvinist, he would have said: "I pray God that ye may have grace to fight against your carnal natures till death, and that then your whole spirit and soul and body be made blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

It is a waste of words to labor to prove that the Pauline theology does not locate entire sanctification in regeneration, or in death. It is as evident as a lightning flash in midnight blackness that the greatest of the apostles held that believers are not entirely sanctified at conversion; but that they may be at any time after that change, and as soon after as their wills and faith will co-operate with the Divine will.

It remains for us to inquire more particularly what entire sanctification is, and how it may be attained. The words *sanctify*, *sanctified*, and *sanctification* are used in our English Bible about one hundred and thirty times. The first and literal meanings are *to make holy*—that is, morally pure, free from sin—*made holy*, and *holiness*. They also have a secondary, or figurative meaning. When applied to things, to time, and to official personages, to sanctify means to set apart; to be sanctified means to be thus set apart; and sanctification means the act or state of being set apart. For example, to sanctify a golden dish in the ancient tabernacle or temple was to set it apart to be used only in religious services, perhaps to receive and hold the blood of the sacrificial lamb. To sanctify a building is to set it apart, by solemn ceremonies, to be a place of religious worship. To sanctify a portion of time, as the first day of the week, is to set it apart to be spent in religious exercises. To sanctify a minister or priest is to set him apart by ordination or anointing, that he may abstain from all worldly business and devote himself wholly to the work of God. In this figurative sense, we call the silver vessels which we use on the sacramental table sanctified or holy vessels; we call this church a sanctified or holy house; we call the minister who preaches

to us and gives us the communion bread and wine a holy man; we call this day, on which we assemble to sing and pray and preach, a sanctified or holy day. Jesus once applied the term sanctify to himself, in this accommodated sense, when he said: "For their sakes"—that is, for the sake of his disciples— "I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified through the truth." He meant that he set himself apart to be a sacrifice for sin, as the lamb was set apart anciently to be sacrificed on the altar of God at Jerusalem.

But whenever in the Bible the words sanctify, sanctified, and sanctification are applied to human beings, apart from any official station to which they may have been called, they always mean to *make holy*, or *morally pure*, *made holy*, and the *state of being holy*. When God talks about sanctifying you, he means to make you personally holy. When you have been sanctified, you will be holy. When you have been sanctified wholly, you will be entirely holy. And that dreadful word *sanctification*, which frightens so many when they hear it, and which strangles so many when they try to speak it, means "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly," means " The very God of peace make you, in your personal character"—in your inward and outward life—"entirely holy."

The word "*blameless*," in the second clause of the text, helps us to understand what Paul means by "make you entirely holy." He seems to think that a sinful being, saved and made entirely holy, is blameless; not faultless, but blameless. Blameless means perfectly pure in motive and desire, and filled with

love, though defective in knowledge, judgment, and memory.

The school-teacher writes a beautiful copy for the six-year-old boy, and tells him to reproduce it as exactly as he can. Full of the spirit of love and obedience and industry, he sets himself to his task, and slowly and carefully traces the loops and curves. When it is finished, he holds it up, with shining face and ink-smeared fingers, for the teacher's inspection and praise. Of itself, it is a most wretched piece of work; it is very far from being faultless. But the teacher says, "Well done!" because she knows that love has done its best. The boy is blameless—not faultless. If he practices twenty years, his penmanship may become relatively faultless; but it will never be more blameless that it is to-day.

Entire sanctification is that state of inward purity into which the believer comes, through the blood of Christ and by the power of the Holy Ghost, where all his works, being wrought in love, though not faultlessly wrought, are blameless in the sight of God.

What does the entire sanctification of spirit, soul, and body mean? Man is a trinity. He is spirit, soul, and body. The spirit is the immortal part of man. It is what we commonly call soul. It is the real man. It is that which will exist ages after the body has turned to dust. The spirit is intellect, will, and emotions. If you solve a problem in mathematics, or commit a poem to memory, it is your spirit which works out the problem, or grasps and retains the poem. If you resolve on any course of action, it is your spirit which resolves. If you love a friend, or hate an enemy, or feel gratitude, anger, or revenge,

it is your spirit which loves, or hates, or is grateful, angry, or revengeful.

The entire sanctification, or perfect purification, of the spirit means perfect honesty and purity of thought; perfect harmony between the human will and the Divine will; and the extermination of all impure passions, affections, and desires. When your whole spirit has been sanctified, you will utterly loathe and repel all impure and untruthful suggestions; your will will be the will of your God; you will love God with all your heart; you will love all men—even your enemies—as you love yourself; and all envy, jealousy, anger, impatience, covetousness, selfishness, bitterness, and unbelief will be gone, branch and root. To the wholly sanctified, truth is dearer than life. To the wholly sanctified, the sweetest thing in all the universe is the will of God. To the wholly sanctified, the old Adam—the carnal nature—is crucified and dead.

The soul, in the text, is the lower, animal soul, containing the passions and desires which we have in common with the brutes. But in the true man it is ennobled and drawn up by the spirit. In the unspiritual, the unconverted man, the spirit is crushed down and subordinated to the animal soul. The soul is the seat of all the bodily appetites, passions, and instincts—such as the desire for food, the love of the sexes, the dread of death, and many others which your thoughts will suggest, but which I will not name.

The entire sanctification of the soul means the perfect purification and perfect government of all the natural, bodily appetites. The wholly-sanctified man enjoys his food; but he is not a glutton. He takes pleasure in the society of the other half of humanity;

but he is not licentious in act or desire. He delights in beautiful pictures, landscapes, furniture, and music; but his affections are not set on such things as these. He loves life; but he is not afraid to die. He walks the earth like a beast; but his conversation is in heaven. His feet are on the ground; but his head is above the clouds.

The animal passions of the unconverted, sensual man are like a span of wild horses running away with the driver, who has lost all control, and dashing swiftly toward the verge of an awful precipice. The animal passions of the wholly-sanctified man are like the same horses completely tamed and perfectly controlled. Not one of them is killed or hamstrung; but they are brought into subjection to the law of love, and Christ sits in the chariot and directs their movements. The only truly temperate man is the wholly sanctified; he is temperate in all things.

We all know what Paul means by the body. The body is this mass of matter in which we live, and which will soon crumble into dust, with all its members and organs. Of itself it is neither good nor bad; it can neither do righteousness nor commit sin. But the indwelling human spirit can use it as an instrument of unrighteousness or holiness.

By the entire sanctification of the body, as distinguished from the spirit and soul, I understand the complete deliverance of the body from all unnatural appetites and habits. A wholly-sanctified body can not, at the same time, be a slave to alcohol, opium, or tobacco. Our Sanctifier, the Holy Ghost, can eradicate all artificial appetites. When a drunkard experiences pardon and regeneration, he gets the victory over his appetite, and is a drunkard no longer.

But his appetite remains, like a chained lion, often roaring and trying to tear himself loose. When the man experiences entire sanctification, the lion is killed. Now he has no craving for that which intoxicates; but loathes the vile stuff as much as he loved it once. All through our communities you can find men who testify that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses them from the sin of drunkenness and from the appetite for strong drink.

Tobacco is not so cruel a tyrant as the intoxicating cup. Nicotine does not work such ruin and misery and death and damnation as alcohol. But he is an unclean monster, from whose foul clutches the man of God ought to be free. There are good men who smoke and chew tobacco; but they would be much better men if they did not. Who can doubt that it is God's will that his dear children shall be free from such an unnatural and uncomely habit? Who doubts that Paul's injunction, "Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God," refers, in part, to tobacco? Paul did not know anything about the poisonous Indian weed; but the Spirit of inspiration, which was in him, did. If the use of tobacco is not a filthiness of the flesh, what is? You can not perfect holiness if you defile your body, which belongs to God, and waste your money, which is his, by the use of tobacco.

Your body is, or ought to be, the temple of the Holy Ghost. You are bound to keep that temple in as clean and healthful a condition as you can, that the indwelling Spirit of God may use it to the utmost for his glory and for the good of humanity. Surely a body which is steeped in nicotine, and which reeks with stenchful vapors, is not wholly sanctified. Men, once

the bond-slaves of tobacco, stand up all through the Church to testify that the sanctifying grace of God has, in a moment of time, cleansed them from all desire for the weed, and made the smoke of pipe or cigar seem almost as hateful as the smoke of the bottomless pit.

Vastly more seductive, deadly, and enslaving than tobacco or alcohol is opium. And yet many instances are on record of persons, long bound by that dreadful habit, who, by the sanctifying power of the Holy Ghost, have been made perfectly free in a moment.

But I will not enlarge. I must, however, insist that the entire sanctification of the body, for which Paul prays, includes perfect deliverance from all unnatural appetites and habits. It seems to be a self-evident proposition that a body which craves opium, tobacco, or alcohol is not yet wholly sanctified.

"Faithful is he that calleth you" to this entire sanctification of spirit, soul, and body, "who also will do it." Do you not hear the voice of God calling you to this higher plane of Christian living; calling you to leave the valley and climb to the mountain-top; calling you to abandon the basement of the Palace Beautiful, and to mount to the cupola, where, through the telescope of perfect faith, you may see the gates of the Celestial City?

It is God that calls you unto entire sanctification, and it is God "who will also do it." God will sanctify you wholly. He only can. You can not, of yourself, improve your own spiritual condition in the slightest degree. You can not reach the elevation to which you aspire by self-mortification, by culture, or by growth in grace. But God can reach down, and, laying hold on you by the strong arm of his omnipotence,

lift you out of your doubts and fears and besetments, up into the full liberty which is in Jesus Christ.

It is faith that moves the arm of God. We all profess to hold the doctrine of salvation by faith. Yet we sometimes act as though we believed in salvation by works. How many have tried to get entire sanctification by works! Let me give you a single illustration. Some years since, while serving the Church in the capacity of a teacher, I had under my tuition a Christian young man of marked ability and tried integrity, who, for some terms, had held the first or second place in his class. But at length I noticed a change. He fell behind. His recitations were almost invariably poor. He took his place almost at the foot. For several weeks nothing was said. But one day, when we were together alone, I bluntly asked him what was the matter—why he was lagging behind his classmates. His answer was this: "When I used to stand at the head of my class, when I made brilliant recitations and surpassed my fellows, I found myself giving way to sinful pride. I was proud of my superiority, or I was strongly tempted to be. I tried to keep the wicked feeling down. I did not want to be proud. I resolved that I would not be proud. I struggled against myself with all my might. But it was all in vain. Pride was there. Sometimes I kept it down; but more frequently it got the upper-hand before I was aware. I therefore came to the conclusion that I would take away the food on which my pride fed itself. I resolved that I would make poor recitations on purpose, and so, by mortifying, kill my pride." I replied: "My dear fellow, whatever mental capacity you have is the gift of God. He intends that you shall make the most of all you pos-

sess. In thus burying your talents, you are wronging your Maker and yourself. Besides, you will certainly fail in your purpose. You can never kill your pride by self-mortification. Instead of starving to death, it will thrive and grow. There is but one way to get rid of this root of bitterness which troubles you so much. God can take it out of the soil of your heart in a moment; and he will, in answer to earnest, believing prayer."

God can sanctify you throughout body, soul, and spirit. There is no question as to his ability. Neither is there any question as to his willingness. He will do it. He has promised to do it: not if you will mortify your flesh; not if you will perform certain good works; not if you will strive to grow in grace—but if you will believe. Faith! faith! faith! is the Christian's watchword.

When the miller has a grist in his hopper, and his customer stands waiting to see it ground, he does not go down below and turn the machinery with his hands. Neither does he dip up water from the mill-pond, and pour it upon the paddles of the great wheel. He does not purpose to furnish the power from his own muscles. He steps to the corner there, where you see that pole protruding through a hole in the floor, and, with both his hands, he pushes it down till it is almost out of sight. Almost instantly the stones begin to turn; and soon the wheat is flour. You are not expected—for you are utterly unable—to furnish the power necessary to wholly sanctify your spirit, soul, and body. But back there, in the hollow of God's hand, is an inexhaustible reservoir. You are merely required to raise the gate of faith, and, in an instant, a flood of Divine love and power will deluge

your soul with heavenly glory, sweeping away all the remains of the carnal mind, and filling you "with all the fullness of God."

Renounce the world. Cast its empty trifles behind your back. Consecrate your all to God. Lay yourself upon his altar. Then wait there, with your eyes turned toward heaven, expecting every moment that the fire will come down and consume your sacrifice.

Is there a Christian here who fears entire sanctification? Will it harm any one to be wholly saved from sin? Is it a blot on God's character that he is entirely holy? Will holiness lessen your happiness or detract from your manhood? Rather, is not holiness the most beautiful object on which our thoughts can rest? Is not the thought that we may be entirely sanctified in this life enough to entrance our minds and fill us with righteous impatience to have God come this moment and cut short the blessed work? Let us draw as near the Infinite as we may, and hide ourselves forever in the radiance which flashes from his dazzling throne.

XIV.

DAVID'S DOUBLE PRAYER.

"Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."—PSALM LI, 7.

WITHOUT any reasonable doubt David wrote the fifty-first Psalm. It was written at about the middle of his reign of forty years. It was written after his terrible sin and fall. This discourse will be an attempt to expound the entire Psalm.

There is hardly anything in the Bible more sad than this chapter in David's life. David was a true servant of God. He was converted in his childhood. God was with him when he was a shepherd boy, giving him inspiration to sing; and strength and skill to kill the wild beasts which would have destroyed his flocks; and faith and power to vanquish the giant of Gath. He was called of God to be king of Israel, and was inspired to write many Psalms, which have been the comfort of millions now in heaven, and of millions still on the way. He was also a prophet, and foretold the coming of his greater Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. God declared that he was "a man after his own heart." And yet he yielded to temptation, and committed two dreadful sins. After his repentance and restoration, he wrote this Psalm, expressing the feelings, desires, and purposes of his heart during the time he was threading the dark gorge of repentance.

How could a man like David experience such a

fearful fall? I can see three reasons. The first is, that he left off working for God; he settled down into a state of inaction; he made up his mind to take life easy for the remnant of his days. Hitherto, when there was any fighting to be done for God, he led his army to battle, and fought at the front, where the fire was the hottest and the arrows flew the thickest. But now he sends forth his men to the war under the command of Joab, and stays at home to rest and have a pleasant time. That was the beginning of his backsliding. Many begin to backslide, in these days, from the same cause. Whenever I hear a man well advanced in years say, "Let some one else bear the heavy burdens now; I have done my share; I will not be an officer of the Church any longer; I am going to take life a little easier," I tremble for him. Though he does not intend it, he is taking his first step toward the backslider's doom. My brother, you must not lay off your armor, you must not cease working for God and the Church with all your might as long as a spark of life remains in your heart, or a throb of intelligence in your brain. If you would make sure of heaven, gird on the whole armor, push your way to the very front, and fight for God with all your might till you are shot dead in your tracks. The people of God went out to battle; "but David tarried still at Jerusalem." No wonder he fell into the snare of the devil!

The second reason why David backslid is, that he left off minding his own business, and went to minding his neighbor's business. Walking upon the flat roof of his house, he looked down into the door-yard of Uriah, to see what was being done there. That moment the devil shot an arrow of temptation into his heart, and he fell. If you mind your neighbor's busi-

ness instead of your own, you may expect to fall as David fell.

The third and chief cause of David's fall was, that he had a traitor in the camp. I mean that the old Adam, the carnal nature, the body of sin, with which David was born into the world, had not been cast out of his heart. And so, when Satan bombarded the citadel of his soul with the cannon-balls of fierce temptation, the traitor within threw open the gate, and let the enemy enter. In other words, though David had experienced justification and regeneration, he had not been cleansed from all sin; he had not been entirely sanctified. Therefore, when the temptation assailed him from without, the evil nature within responded to the battle-shout, joined in the fight, and David became Satan's captive and slave.

I think I hear some one say, "Is it impossible for one who has been entirely sanctified to fall into sin?" No, by no means; but the liability to sin is vastly less, just as a fort, every member of whose garrison is loyal to the flag, is much less likely to be captured by the foe than a fort which has traitors disguised among its defenders. When you have been cleansed from all sin, you will still have to watch and fight and pray against temptation; but your enemies will all be in front and on the outside, not behind and within.

David seems to have gone on in sin for about a year without any compunction of conscience. He might have gone blindly down to eternal death, and doubtless would, but for the fact that there was a faithful, fearless preacher in the city, a man who feared nothing but sin. His name was Nathan. God told him to reprove the king. Nathan was ready to do his duty. Instead of attacking him in the temple

on the Sabbath, in the presence of the whole congregation, as some modern preachers do, he took a wiser and braver course; he went right to the palace, and talked directly to the king when no one else was present. Is it not a mean and cowardly thing for a preacher to lash a whole congregation, because one man sitting before him has been guilty of a particular sin? Brother minister, do not do that. Be brave, like Nathan. On Saturday or Monday, go to the sinner's home, take him alone, plainly but kindly tell him his fault, and exhort him to repent. You may save his soul. But if you attack him in public, you will arouse his antagonism, and drive him further into sin.

Well, Nathan went to see David. He knew that he took his life in his hands. The king was an absolute despot, and if he became angry and struck off the saucy preacher's head, there was no one to ask him why. That made no difference with Nathan; he loved righteousness more than he loved life. And yet he was not a fanatic. As he went along toward the palace, he said to himself: "How can I most wisely present the truth to the king, so that his conscience will be on my side? How can I combine the serpent's wisdom with the harmlessness of the dove?" The Holy Spirit was his teacher, and gave him a text for his sermon. The preacher began by telling the king a story: "There was a very poor man, who had one pet lamb. He had a neighbor who was rich in flocks and herds. Wishing to set some nice spring lamb before a visitor, the rich man went and stole the poor man's pet." The preacher told the story with such dramatic power that the king was greatly moved. All his love of righteousness was aroused,

and he interrupted the preacher by crying out, "The man that hath done this shall surely die." "Well," said Nathan, "you are the man." Conviction went to the heart of the king like a whole quiverful of arrows. He bowed his head. He said, "I have sinned." He humbled himself before God, and was forgiven. After his restoration to the Divine favor, he wrote this Psalm.

He prays for two things: Forgiveness and perfect cleansing, for justification and entire sanctification. He prays for restoration to the favor of God, and for the rooting out of his old carnal nature, so that he will not be likely again to lose the smiles of heaven.

Six times in this Psalm David prays for justification and for entire sanctification. The first double prayer is contained in the first and second verses. "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions" is the first prayer for forgiveness. "Wash me throughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin," is the first prayer for perfect cleansing.

Notice the ground on which David hopes for pardon: "According to thy lovingkindness, according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies." He does not say, "Blot out my transgressions, because I am not so very bad, after all; or because I sinned under strong temptation; or because I killed old Goliath; or because I brought the ark to Jerusalem; or because I have written a great many beautiful Psalms; or because I am no worse than many other men." The only reason why David hoped for mercy, was that it was God's nature to forgive. He could not find anything in himself—in his past, or his present, or his

future—on account of which he could ask God to forgive him. David's humiliation was so deep, and his repentance so thorough, that he had not the slightest inclination to excuse or palliate his sin.

Like that is all true repentance. The man whom God forgives is the one who says, "I have sinned," and does not add any "buts." The only reason why the true penitent hopes to be forgiven is, because God is a being of "lovingkindness" and "tender mercies." My friend, if you have the slightest disposition to excuse your sins, you are not in such a state of heart that God can forgive you.

But David realized that he needed something besides forgiveness. So he went on to pray for entire sanctification—"Wash me throughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin." Notice the word "throughly;" that is a good old English word, which in some of our Bibles has been changed to "thoroughly." I like throughly better; it means through and through. David said: "Wash me through and through from mine iniquity." The Hebrew is, "multiply to wash." Wash out all the stains of sin; wash out all the sin itself; wash out all the passion and lust; wash out all the remains of sin; wash out all my carnality, and make me clean through and through. What is such cleansing as that, if not entire sanctification? It is what Paul had in mind when he prayed for the Thessalonians, "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly."

In verses 3 to 8, David, the second time, prays for forgiveness and perfect cleansing. Notice what he says: "For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight; that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear

when thou judgest." That is an honest, whole-hearted, and complete confession of actual sin. We can not find in David any disposition to cover up or extenuate his guilt. He makes a clean breast of all his villainy. "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight." David fully grasped the truth that sin is sin, not because it injures the sinner, but because it is opposed to the will of God. There are some would-be philosophers who tell us that an act is sinful, when it is found to be injurious to ourselves or to others. David did not believe that lie. If he had been asked to define sin, he would have said: "Sin is any action which is contrary to the law of God." David had reached that point in his repentance where he loathed his sins, simply and solely because they were injurious and hateful to God. The thought of the wrong he had done to the Heavenly King so filled his mind, that the injury to Bathsheba and Uriah seemed, by comparison, to be nothing. Till a man is sorry for his sins only because they are injurious and hateful to God he is not truly penitent, and he can not be forgiven.

No man was ever hung for murder who was not sorry that he committed the deed. But many a murderer has died on the scaffold unrepentant. He is sorry for his crime, because it has brought disgrace and death to him, not because it has insulted and dishonored God. No one can thus repent, unless God gives him repentance. Many of our converts are not genuinely converted, because God never gave them repentance. Do you say that is Calvinism? Let me add this remark: "God always gives repentance to all who try to repent, and persist in trying."

In verses 5 to 8 David expresses his need of entire

cleansing, after being justified, and prays that he may be entirely cleansed. "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." In those terrific words the inspired psalmist sets forth the hideous doctrine of human depravity. Every one of us may truthfully utter the same words. I can trace my descent back through eight generations of godly, devoted ancestors; and yet I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. If I could trace my family line back to Abraham, or Noah, or Adam, and find a holy man at every link, still it would be true: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." Those words are true of every human being ever born, except our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We were all born with a twist, a bent, a leaning towards sin. It is easy for us to do wrong; it is hard for us to do right. The poisonous weeds of sin spring up spontaneously in every human heart; the flowers and fruits of righteousness must be sown and cultured with the utmost care. Evil is ingrained in us. No human skill, no effort of the will, no culture of the schools, no polish of polite society, no growth in years or in virtue, can ever get it out. You may saw and plane and polish a piece of bird's-eye maple, but you can never straighten out the peculiar grain of the wood. All your rubbing and polishing and oiling and varnishing will only make the grain more visible and distinct. So it is with the ingrained sinfulness of our depraved and wicked hearts. We were dyed-in-the-wool in sin. Before the wool was woven, before it was spun, before it was carded, or clipped from the back of the sheep, it was dyed through and through with the blackness of sin.

The dye is so deep that no human skill can ever bleach it out.

Take a watch-spring. Uncoil it. Stretch it out on this floor. Pile a ton's weight on each end, and another ton on the middle. Go off and leave it. Come back at the end of a thousand years. If the watch-spring has been kept perfectly dry since you went away, when you take off the weights—whir-r-r-r-r!—the watch-spring is coiled as tightly as it was at the beginning. No amount of pressure, no matter how long continued, will ever take the coil out of that spring. In every one of us there is such a twist as that toward sin. Nothing but the almighty power of God can take the twist out of our hearts. It *must* be taken out before we enter heaven.

David knew that the twist of depravity was in him. He knew that there was a spring coiled up in his soul, which set in motion all the wheels of appetite, passion, and lust. He knew that the sins of adultery and murder had their origin in that infernal spring. He had come to believe that God desired "truth in the inward parts," and that he was able to make him "know wisdom in the hidden part." And so he prays: "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."

The hyssop was a plant like our broom-corn. When the priest used to go into the tabernacle, he would carry a basin of blood in his left hand and a bunch of hyssop in his right, sprinkling as he went. That sprinkled blood was a type of the blood of Christ, which was to be shed and sprinkled in the after ages. David seems to have caught a prophetic glimpse of the Savior of the world, and his prayer really means:

"Sprinkle me with the blood of thy incarnate Son, and I shall be clean from all my depravity." Then he adds, "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."

Is there anything whiter than snow? Yes, snow is not perfectly white. It is said that snow, taken from the summit of Mont Blanc, two miles and a quarter above the level of the sea, and melted, reveals particles of soot, carried, perhaps, by the winds of heaven from the chimneys of Leeds and Manchester. Snow is not perfectly clean. David prayed that God would wash away all his depravity, and make him perfectly clean—whiter than snow. He had carried the bent and twist and bird's-eye grain and sevenfold dye of sin for fifty years; he did not believe that it was necessary to carry it any longer. And so he prayed: "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."

"Make me to have joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice." In the cruel, old days they had an instrument of torture and death called "the wheel." They would bind the condemned to it, in some way, and then make the wheel revolve till every bone in the man's body was cracked and broken and splintered. Under the convicting power of the Holy Spirit, David felt like that. God had put him on the wheel, and God's hand had turned the crank till he had not a whole bone left. That represents the state of perfect repentance and absolute despair of self, which must precede the reception of the blessing of entire cleansing. Before God can wash you and make you whiter than snow, you must lie at his feet, with every bone broken, like a mass of quivering jelly. Then Infinite Love can heal you, and set you on your feet, and make the bones which *he* has

broken rejoice. One reason why many seekers after full salvation do not find it is, that their bones are not all broken; their self-sufficiency is not entirely subdued; they do not "*hunger* and *thirst* after righteousness."

In verses 9 and 10, David, the third time, prays for forgiveness and perfect cleansing—for justification and entire sanctification. This is very plain: "Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities." What is that but a plea for the forgiveness of actual transgressions of the Divine law? It is that, and nothing more. But when he says, "Create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me," he is praying for something entirely different from, and far beyond justification. It is strange that any one can confound two things so totally unlike; and yet many do. Justification removes the guilt of actual sin. Entire sanctification, for which the royal suppliant prays in the tenth verse, takes away the body of sin, out of which actual sins are born—the hellish brood of an infernal dam. Justification kills the cubs. Entire sanctification kills the she-wolf, which brought forth the cubs, and suckles them.

"*Create* in me a clean heart." Those words tell us that entire sanctification is God's act. It comes not by growth in grace. We have no part in it, except to put ourselves where he can lay his Omnipotent hand upon us, and *create* us *clean*. If ever you have a heart one hundred per cent pure, it will not be when you have grown in grace so many years, or have suffered so many self-crucifixions, or have fought so many battles with self, or have offered so many prayers, or have uttered so many groans; it will be when the Infinite Creator of the universe speaks, "Be clean," and

it is done. If God is to create in you a clean heart, why not now? why not this moment?

In the eleventh verse David makes his double prayer the fourth time. "Cast me not away from thy presence," is a prayer, in the indirect form, for the forgiveness of his actual sins. The only thing on account of which God casts man away from his presence is sin knowingly committed. When those sins have been forgiven, God no longer casts the man away from his presence, but takes him into his favor and family.

"Take not thy Holy Spirit" from me, is the Oriental way of saying, "Give me thy Holy Spirit." David thus prays for what the New Testament calls "the baptism of the Holy Ghost." He prays for that which the disciples of Jesus received on the day of Pentecost—that to which Peter alluded when he spoke concerning Cornelius and his military family, at the Council of Jerusalem: "God bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, *purifying their hearts by faith.*" To receive the Holy Ghost (or, as David phrases it, not to have the Holy Spirit taken away), and to have the heart purified by faith, are one and the same experience.

David prays his double prayer the fifth time, in the twelfth verse: "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me by thy free Spirit." David lost the joy of God's salvation by the commission of willful sins. To have the lost joy restored is the same as to have those sins forgiven. "Uphold me by thy free Spirit," is a prayer for perfect cleansing. The Holy Ghost is called the "free" Spirit, because he makes those whose hearts he fills free from inbred sin.

To be upheld by the free Spirit is to "have access by faith into this grace wherein we *stand*," of which Paul speaks in the fifth chapter of Romans. David knew that he had fallen into sin through the depravity of his nature; and, in praying to be upheld, or kept from falling into sin again, by the free Spirit, he really prayed that the free Spirit would set him free from depravity, or cleanse him from all inbred sin. That is what Paul and Wesley call "entire sanctification."

In the thirteenth verse David pauses from his supplication to tell what will be the result of his receiving the blessing of perfect cleansing: "Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee." That statement is everlastingly true. The entire sanctification of one believer always means the conversion of many sinners. That is one reason why we preach the doctrine of entire sanctification so constantly and explicitly. Because we desire the conversion of sinners, we labor for the sanctification of believers. Jesus and the twelve labored as evangelists three years, and only five hundred persons professed conversions. Of these, only one hundred and twenty could be found when a meeting was called to organize a Church. That was before the disciples had received the blessing of entire sanctification. But at Pentecost the blessing was experienced—they were filled with the Holy Ghost—and, as a result, three thousand sinners were converted in a single day. If every member of the Methodist Episcopal Church would pray David's prayer, and experience the blessing described by him in the words, "uphold me by thy free Spirit," I believe our membership would be doubled in a single year, and the whole world evangelized in a single generation.

Notice the expression, "sinners shall be converted *unto thee.*" Many of our converts are converted *unto us,* because we are not fit instruments for God's use on account of the depravity remaining in our hearts. God can not do thorough work with badly-tempered tools. A believer in whom any carnality remains, is an imperfectly-tempered tool.

In verses 14 and 15 David offers his sixth double prayer; for the sixth time he prays for forgiveness and a clean heart: "Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation." There is agony in that prayer. He was intensely in earnest. There was innocent blood on his soul, the blood of his loyal subject and brave officer, Uriah, whom he had foully murdered. He was in a condition somewhat like that of Macbeth with his hands dripping with Duncan's blood; only the Jew was penitent, and the Scotchman was not. A more heart-rending cry for pardon could not well be imagined. If God will only forgive his monstrous crimes his "tongue shall sing aloud" of God's "righteousness"—that is, of the *justification* which God has mercifully bestowed.

"O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall show forth thy praise," is a prayer for a clean heart. David wanted the tongue of fire, which God gave the disciples on the day of Pentecost, when he filled them with the Spirit of holiness. We can not open our own lips, so that our mouth shall really show forth the praise of God. On the evening of the arrest in the garden, Peter opened his lips, and his mouth said, "Though I should die with thee, yet will I not forsake thee." A few hours after, he opened his lips, and swore that he knew not Jesus. That was before the man had experienced the blessing of entire sanctifi-

cation—the old Adam was in him, and had gotten the upper hand. But fifty-three days later he received the baptism of the Holy Ghost; and then the indwelling God opened his lips, and so showed forth His praise through his mouth that three thousand souls were convicted and converted in the space of a few minutes. When, and only when, you are filled with the Spirit, God can open your lips and speak through your mouth to the praise of his holy name. It is as clear as sunlight that "open thou my lips" is not a prayer for the first blessing, justification; but for the second blessing, a clean heart—the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

Have we not discovered the key to this wonderful psalm? Can you not see that it is a double prayer, uttered six times, in as many different forms, for the blessings of pardon and perfect cleansing? Could not the teaching of the whole psalm be condensed into one sentence (1 John i, 9): "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to *forgive* us our sins, *and* to *cleanse* us from all unrighteousness?"

The sixteenth and seventeenth verses teach us how we may obtain the blessings of pardon and perfect cleansing: "Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it; thou delightest not in burnt offerings. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." Forms and ceremonies, gifts of money and labor of the hands, works of righteousness and acts of self-denial, deeds of charity and tortures of the body, can not bring pardon or purity. But God *gives* them to all who thoroughly repent and cast themselves, broken in pieces, at his feet. "A broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart," means perfect repentance; and also perfect dis-

trust of self, or, what is the same thing, perfect faith in God.

Verse eighteen is a prayer for the prosperity of the Church. While the Psalmist king was in a backslidden state, religion languished; the pious hung their heads in sadness and shame; and unbelievers scoffed and exulted. But now that the wanderer has returned, and the penitent seeker is made "whiter than snow," it will be the "good pleasure" of God to "build again" the walls of the spiritual Jerusalem. When all, or most, of the members of any Church experience the blessing of "a clean heart," a mighty revival will sweep through the surrounding community, and a multitude of living stones will be built into her walls.

"Thou shalt then be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offerings, and whole burnt offerings: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar." When the Church is holy, and teaches holiness, God is pleased with her ritual, her gifts, and her labors. Our church edifices, our preaching, our singing, our anniversaries, our Sunday-schools, our Leagues, our Conferences, our Conventions, our collections, our enterprises, are pleasing to God, provided holiness is the aim and the result.

XV.

PETER IN PRISON.

"And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews."—ACTS XII, 11.

WHERE are we? What city is this? It seems to be an ancient town? Is it in America, Europe, or Asia? I can answer your questions. We are in Asia. We are in Palestine. We are in Jerusalem, the city of David and Solomon, the city where our Lord was crucified. The centuries have rolled backward. This is the year 44. It is only eleven years since that infinite sacrifice was made on Calvary.

Shall we look about and see the city? Where shall we go? What wonders shall we explore? Shall we visit the temple which King Herod built of marble and gold, working forty and six years? Or shall we examine the three towers, built by the same king, one hundred and fifty, one hundred and eighty, and one hundred and twenty feet high, and named, respectively, Hippicus, Phasaelus, and Mariamne, in honor of his friend, his son, and his wife? Or shall we wander through the royal palace, with its miles of walls and porticoes and gilded chambers inclosing acres of gardens and groves and parks?

No, I shall not take you to see any of these wonders. Instead, I shall take you to a prison. Here it is now. Did you ever see such walls before? They

are at least twenty feet thick. Some of these stones are thirty feet long. Herod the Great piled them up to hold his enemies whom he had in his power. Woe be to the man who finds himself within such barriers, for he can never get out!

We are standing directly in front of the prison gate. It is a huge iron door. See those enormous hinges, and look at those massive bolts and rivet-heads; then tell me what power can release the man behind whom that portal has been slammed. In front of the iron door stand four stalwart, iron-clad soldiers. Before any man can reach the door, he must walk over the prostrate and lifeless forms of those lion-hearted warriors. But we pass through guards and gate unresisted and unseen, for we are phantoms from the nineteenth century walking in the first. What have we here? Four more soldiers and a door of thick planks studded with iron bolts. We pass through, as though guards and gate were nothing but fog. Here is another gate and a third company of guards, armed to the teeth. Still we glide on, like ghosts from the kingdom of death.

Now we are in the inmost cell. What do you see? Stone walls, stone floor, stone ceiling. What else? Two soldiers standing with their backs against the door. Anything else? Two soldiers, making sixteen with all the rest, lying asleep on the floor; and, between them, sleeping, lies the prisoner, bound with a chain to either keeper, so that, if he tries to rise, they will awake. That prisoner is Peter, one of the apostles of Jesus Christ. He has committed the crime of preaching salvation through faith in a crucified and risen Savior. King Herod hates the truth, and has imprisoned its greatest defender. That God himself

may not be able to set him free, the tyrant has confined him in this cell, within these three doors and these triple walls, under the care of these sixteen soldiers. Peter is doomed to die to-morrow morning. What power can save him from the executioner's sword? Who would give a penny for Peter's head?

While the prisoner sleeps, we leave the prison as we came. Now we are in the street. Follow me. What narrow, crooked streets these Oriental cities have! Have you walked far enough? Do you suppose you could find your way back to the prison?

We will enter this house. But, first, I will tell you who lives here. It is a lady named Mary. I know nothing about her husband. She has a son named Mark, and a hired girl named Rose. Mary has company to-night. The principal room is filled with men and women. It is not a progressive-euchre party, or a Church social, but a cottage prayer-meeting. They are all on their knees as we enter. Some brother is leading in prayer. He prays with great fervor and earnestness. The burden of his petition is, "O God, bless Peter, and set him free!" All the others say, "Amen! Amen!" "O God, set Peter free!" goes round the circle, in audible prayer, from every mouth and every heart. If you were asked to what denomination of Christians these people belong, you would say, "Surely they are Methodists." "O God, set Peter free!" Can God answer that prayer? Will he answer it?

We leave the house of Mary, without the help of Rose to open the door, and hurry back to the prison. The condemned apostle is still asleep. His sandals, girdle, and outer garment are lying in a corner of the cell. Suddenly the place, which before was dark

as any midnight, is lighted up with the brightness of a hundred noon-days. In the center of the illumination hovers a strange being in the form of a man, robed in garments of such dazzling and unearthly whiteness that no mortal eye can endure the sight. It is an angel from the realms of glory, brought down by the mighty power of prevailing prayer. Bending above the sleeping apostle, he strikes him on the side and raises him to his feet, saying, "Arise up quickly." The dazed and bewildered prisoner stands on his feet, while his chains fall clanking and ringing on the floor. The sleeping soldiers are locked in the embrace of a still sounder slumber, while those at the door fall like dead men, paralyzed with fear. "Gird thyself and bind on thy sandals," says the angel. Peter obeys, hardly knowing what he does. "Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me," again the heavenly messenger speaks. Led by his angelic guide, Peter walks out of the prison through doors which swing open of their own accord, and past sentinels who are unable to lift a finger against him. Reaching a safe distance in a familiar street, the angel vanishes, and Peter, coming to himself, exclaims, "Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews!"

From the prison, Peter went to the cottage prayer-meeting. There was one person there who expected to see the apostle that night. It was Rose, the hired-girl. While the rest of the company were praying, "O Lord, set Peter free," with little faith that their prayers would be answered, her faith regarded Peter's liberation as a certainty, and she was at the door, with her ear at the key-hole, expecting to hear his step

and voice. Soon her expectation was realized. So happy that she forgot to open the door, she burst into the room where the brethren and sisters were still at prayer, exclaiming, "Peter has come! Peter has come!" No one believed her. Everybody cried, "Rose, you are crazy!" But she insisted that she was not; that Peter was at the door. Then they said, "It is his guardian angel, with his face and voice." Meanwhile, Peter was pounding on the door, and clamoring for admission. When at length the door had been opened, they saw, and believed, that God had answered their prayers.

What lessons has this portion of sacred history for us? The first lesson is, that *religion can save everybody from all worry and painful anxiety.* Look at Peter in prison. There he lies on a bed of stone, in the deepest and darkest cell of Herod's dungeon, bound with chains, with three bolted doors and sixteen soldiers between him and liberty, knowing that unless Divine power interposes in his behalf his head will be hacked off to-morrow morning, and yet he is sleeping as sweetly as a babe on its mother's bosom. How can he sleep on such a dreadful night? Why is he not awake, rolling in agony, thinking of the friends whom he will never see again, and shivering with terror as his imagination pictures the flashing sword of the executioner descending to cut off his head?

Would you be able to sleep to-night if you knew you were to be beheaded to-morrow morning? The explanation is easy. Peter is a Christian. I do not say that he is a Church member, or a professor of religion. But he is a Christian, according to the true Bible standard. He is a Christian through and through. I presume he used to worry and fret and

borrow trouble, and lie awake nights tormented with apprehensions of coming ill. But about ten years ago he received the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and since that time he has never known what worry was, but has had perfect peace, believing that "all things work together for good to them that love God."

What religion did for Peter, it will do for you, if you will have it in all its fullness. If you only believed the promises which God has written in this Book with all your heart, you would never worry, or have one anxious care. Why should you not believe God with all your heart? Did he ever deceive you? Does he ever forget? Is his arm ever shortened that he can not save? Can he lie? When you, a Christian, worry or borrow trouble, you dishonor God; you say to the world, in effect: "The religion of the Bible is not what it claims to be. It does not save me. It can not save you. You would better let it alone."

Three hundred and forty-two years ago, Bishop Ridley was burned at the stake, in the city of Oxford, England, along with his brother bishop, Latimer. The evening before the execution, some of Ridley's friends were permitted to visit him in his prison cell. One of them offered to sit up with him all night. But he refused, saying, "I mean to go to bed, and, by God's will, to sleep as quietly as ever I did in all my life." And so it was.

The same year that Ridley died at Oxford, John Rogers was burned at Smithfield. Before his execution he was confined in Newgate Prison, with thieves and murderers. One night he lay down on his moldy straw, knowing that he was to burn the next morning. Before him, only a few hours, was the most horrible form of death that his enemies could invent. Some-

where outside the prison walls were his wife and ten children, weeping for him. And yet he lay down and slept so soundly that, when his keepers came the next morning to tell him to get ready for the fire, they had difficulty in shaking him awake.

Such is the power of the religion of Jesus Christ to save those who enjoy it in its fullness from all mental restlessness, worry, and painful care. It is just what this busy, bustling, fretful, nervous generation needs. It is better to give sleep to a weary brain than all the drugs of all the doctors. Seek it this hour at Jesus' feet. Hear him say, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly of heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Once more I ask you to look at Peter, in Herod's prison, on the eve of a horrible execution, "*sleeping* between two soldiers, bound with two chains," with fourteen other soldiers and three bolted doors between him and liberty, and know that a full measure of Christ's salvation is a perfect cure for all worry and corroding care.

Another lesson which the story of Peter has for us is, that *God hears and answers prayer for temporal blessings.* Peter's release from prison was the direct result of the prayers of the Church. The Book says: "Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the Church unto God for him;" then it goes on to tell how the apostle was delivered from his bonds. No one can doubt that the inspired writer intended to have us understand that God delivered Peter because the people prayed. But for prayer, Peter would have lost his head. In an-

swer to prayer, God did what he would not otherwise have done. The faithful prayers of helpless men and women moved the Omnipotent arm to open the doors of Herod's dungeon.

There is as much power in prayer to-day as there ever was. Prayer still moves the arm that moves the world. God still does things which otherwise he would not do, because his people pray. There are men, calling themselves Christians, who say that prayer never moves God at all; that the Almighty never does anything because we pray, which he would not do if we did not; that there is no good in prayer except the reflex influence on the heart that prays. If I held such opinions as those, I would leave the Church, burn my Bible, and call myself an infidel. God does interpose in human affairs, and interfere with nature's laws, in answer to prayer. Prayer has opened prison doors since Peter's day.

Bishop C. C. McCabe, formerly known as "Chaplain" McCabe, is authority for the following story: H. M. Parkhurst was a soldier in the Union army. He belonged to the Twenty-second New York Cavalry, which was recruited at Rochester. In 1864 he was captured by the Confederates, and started for Andersonville prison-pen. While on the way, on a freight train, he kicked a board off the car, and rolled out, while the train thundered on. He struck in a mud-puddle, and was unharmed by the fall. He fled to the woods; but on the fourth day he was recaptured, and started for Andersonville again. Escaping a second time, he was hunted with bloodhounds and taken. But he escaped for the third time, and following the North Star, he almost reached the Union lines, when he was seized once more and hurried Southward. The

captain of the force that captured him said: "This is the last time we shall chase after you. You shall be hung to-morrow morning." A rope was fixed to a tree, and great precautions were taken that he should be on hand to be hanged at sunrise. They spent the night in a little log-hut. Manacles were fastened to the prisoner's wrists and ankles; he was chained to the sill of the house; and two guards were placed at the door with loaded muskets, while the rest of the gang lay around the house on the floor. At about ten o'clock the prisoner went to God with his trouble. He told him that if he would deliver him out of that difficulty, he would serve him with all his might the remainder of his days. He prayed till peace came into his heart, and he knew he was saved. Then he fell asleep, believing that all would be well.

At about two o'clock he suddenly awoke. He never could tell what awakened him. To his amazement his limbs were free. The manacles lay at his feet. He looked at the door. There was only one guard, and he was fast asleep. "Well," said Parkhurst, "the Lord has done his part, and I will do mine." He arose, stole softly past the guard, walked out under the tree from which the rope was swinging, and was once more on his way toward home. This time he was successful. He seems not to have been pursued. When he came in sight of the Stars and Stripes, he fell on his knees, and gave thanks to God. When the war was over, he became a Methodist minister, and, after some years of earnest labor for Christ, died in the triumphs of the faith which he had preached to others. I once related this story in a sermon. After the service a man came to me, and said: "That man was my pastor; I have often heard the story from his

own lips." I hold that that was a miracle, wrought by the power of God in answer to prayer, as truly as was Peter's release from Herod's prison.

I want to tell you that God is not dead, as many seem to suppose. Peter's God is our God. The God of the Church of the first century is the God of the Church of the nineteenth century. We can have all spiritual blessings, and marvelous temporal blessings, in answer to importunate, believing prayer.

Again, the story, of which our text is a part, teaches us *the difference between the prayer of faith and the prayer of formality.* There was one person at that cottage prayer-meeting who prayed the prayer of faith. It was the hired-girl, Rose. She really believed that God would answer the prayers of his people, and send Peter to them that very night. The others did not really believe that God would answer their prayers. I would not say that they had no faith. But surely their faith was very weak and imperfect; for when God did what they were asking him to do, they were greatly surprised, and would not be convinced that he had heard them. Their prayers were more a form than a reality.

Like them are many modern Christians. We meet in the house of God and pray for large blessings, when most of us have very little expectation that we shall receive. If God should do half as much as we ask him to do, we should be frightened almost to death. We use a lot of fine phrases, which we have invented or borrowed, hardly knowing what they mean, and hardly thinking what we are saying. Such prayers have very little value.

Here and there in our Churches there is a man or woman, like Mary's hired-girl, Rose, who prays in

real faith. Most frequently they are persons in the humbler walks of life. They are almost unknown on earth; but their names are often on the tongues of saints and angels before the throne. Their prayers open prison doors. Their prayers bring sweeping revivals of religion. Their prayers make Satan tremble on his tottering throne.

Notice how it was with Miss Rose, of Jerusalem. She prayed for Peter's release. She knew the next morning had been appointed for his execution, and she believed that God would set him free that night. Her faith was so strong that she was at the door listening for Peter's rap and voice. When she heard him, she was not surprised, but ran back into the house, full of joy, and broke up the prayer-meeting by shouting, "Peter has come! Peter has come!" She was so trustful and simple-minded that she supposed, of course, God would deliver Peter in answer to the prayers of his people; it never occurred to her mind that it could possibly be otherwise.

Like Rose was that little girl, of whom you have all heard, who, when a day was appointed for the people to meet in the church and pray for rain, took her umbrella. When some one said, "What do you carry an umbrella for in such dry weather as this?" she answered, in the greatest surprise, "Why, I thought we were going to pray for rain! Of course, I shall need an umbrella." In that churchful of people she was the only one who did not get wet going home.

Brother, sister, do not insult God by praying in unbelief. When you pray, think what you are saying, and ask only for those things which you believe God will give. Ask, in the simplest and most direct words

which you can find, for the blessings which you want now. Ask in faith. "What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye *receive* them, and ye *shall have* them." Believe! believe! believe! If you ask, "How shall I believe?" I answer: The way to believe is to believe. Some persons are all the time trying to believe. Stop trying to believe, and *believe*.

O for the faith of that simple servant-girl at Jerusalem! If there were a few such believers in all our Churches, the whole land, and world, would soon be ablaze with the quenchless flames of a Pentecostal revival.

Peter, imprisoned and released, is a type of many other prisoners who are not shut up within walls of stone and gates of iron. Some men are confined in dungeons of adverse circumstances, or of fierce antagonisms, or of financial embarrassments, or of overwhelming afflictions.

Were you never such a prisoner? Did you never find yourself engaged in some laudable undertaking, where it seemed as though you could never advance another step? Then you were a prisoner. Did it never seem to you that everything and everybody were against you, so that to give up the battle of life and die would be a relief? Then you were a prisoner. Were you never buried in debts so deep that it looked as though you could never get out? Then you were a prisoner. Were you never shut in by calamities and sorrows piled on sorrows, so that you could not see the sky or a ray of light? Then you were a prisoner. To all such prisoners the text promises release. In answer to prayer, "made without ceasing," your chains will fall off, your jailers will be smitten with paralysis, your dungeon doors will swing open of their own ac-

cord, and, when you come to yourself, you will exclaim, "Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me!" Prayer will open any prison, and set any prisoner free.

A Methodist minister, in the State of Vermont, had retired from the pastorate, on account of the loss of his voice, and had resumed his trade of blacksmithing in a little shop which he built ten miles from his last charge. He borrowed money to build his shop and purchase his tools; but little work came in; his family expenses were large; and at the end of the year he found himself in great financial embarrassment. He was a prisoner. He had done his best to keep free; but he was a prisoner. He was in a worse prison than old Herod's at Jerusalem. He was in the dungeon of debt—debts before him, debts behind him, debts on the right hand, debts on the left hand, debts beneath him, debts above him, debts at the first door, debts at the middle door, debts at the outside door. He tried every way to escape. He could do nothing but pray. This he did with all his heart for many days.

One night he was sleeping, or trying to sleep, between two debts, bound with two debts, while fourteen other debts before the door kept the prison. The next day certain obligations must be met, or something worse than death—the loss of his reputation as a Christian minister—would be the result. He thought if he could only borrow a certain sum of money for a few months he could meet his obligations for the time, and pay back the borrowed money when it should come due. So he humbly and trustingly asked God to send him a certain amount, which he named. He prayed in faith, and fell asleep..

When he awoke, "a light shined in the prison;" the Lord had sent his angel. The word angel means a messenger. The Lord had sent a messenger. A wealthy Christian man from the minister's last charge was at the door. As soon as he came in, he said, "Do you want any money?" "Yes," answered the minister, "I do." "How much?" "Three hundred dollars." "I knew you did. God told me so last night in a dream, twice repeated. Here is the money. My wife told me I would better come and find out before I took it out of the bank and lost my interest, for I might be mistaken; but I was so sure I brought it along. Take it; here it is." The man of God was almost beside himself with wonder and joy. When he was come to himself, he said, "Now I know of a surety that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of the Herod of debt." Brother, if you are in prison anywhere, the Lord, in answer to prayer, will send his angel and bring you out.

Lastly—and this is the most important lesson of our text—Peter, imprisoned and released, symbolizes *the sinner and the manner of his release from the bondage of sin.* Every sinner, every unconverted person, is a prisoner. He is shut up in Satan's dungeon. Walls of evil habits close him round. He is barred in behind iron doors of sinful propensities and passions. He is bound with chains of appetite and lust.

Many times sixteen devils and fiends watch at the gates to prevent his escape. You may not wish to agree with me when I say every sinner is a prisoner in Satan's dungeon. You know that the drunkard is a prisoner. Chains of adamantine habit are twisted in sevenfold coils around his soul. The demons of the

pit are his jailers, and will soon be his executioners. He drinks the poisoned cup, which he knows will destroy his body and damn his soul. You are ready to admit that the opium victim is a prisoner. Against reason and conscience and will, he persists in his degrading habit because the spirit of evil has him in his power. You will not object when I say that the profane swearer is a prisoner.

A man whom Christianity had lifted out of the depths said to me, speaking of his old life of sin: "There was only one way in which I could have been cured of swearing; that was to cut out my tongue. If a gallows had stood before me with dangling rope, and I had been told that if I swore again I should be hung at once, I could not have kept the profane words from slipping out of my mouth." That man was a captive in Satan's prison. So are all sinners. The only difference is in the thickness of their prison walls, the weight of their chains, and the number of their jailers.

My friend, if you are unconverted, you are in prison. The night of sin is upon you. You are bound with the two chains of inward and outward corruption. You are sleeping between two soldiers, whose names are the World and the Flesh. A crowd of depraved passions before the door keep the prison. Soon the morning of eternity will come. Then you will be led out to execution; and your soul will taste the bitter pains of eternal death.

How is the sinner delivered from the prison of sin and saved from eternal death? The first agency is prayer. The great hope in your case, my friend, is that prayer is "made without ceasing of the Church unto God" for you. If the Church did not pray, few,

if any, sinners would ever be saved. But you must pray for yourself. In answer to prayer a light will shine in the darkness of your prison cell. An angel will arouse you from your sleep, and lift you to your feet. The chains, which all the wisdom and power of man could not break, will fall from your limbs. Your sinful passions and appetites and lusts will be paralyzed by the power of God. Your prison doors will open of their own accord, and you will walk forth a free man. You will be so happy that you will almost think the whole affair is a dream. But soon you will come to yourself, and will joyfully exclaim, "Now I know of a surety that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of the devil, and from all the expectation of my spiritual foes!"

You see the difference between the sinner and the Christian. The sinner is a person who, the night before his intended execution, is sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, while the keepers before the door keep the prison. The Christian is a free man, who can say, "Now I *know* that the Lord hath sent his angel and hath delivered me."

Peter did not guess, or hope, that the Lord had delivered him from prison; he knew it beyond the shadow of a doubt. The Christian is not obliged to sing:

> "'T is a point I long to know,
> Much it gives my anxious thought,—
> Do I love the Lord, or no?
> Am I his, or am I not?"

He can say: "I know that Jesus saves me, saves me now." Millions on millions have had that experience; it may be yours.

Less than a hundred miles from this place lived a man sixty-five years old, who had been a prisoner in Satan's dungeon from boyhood. He was a very hard and wicked man—a drunkard, a gambler, an awful blasphemer, a fighter, and a hater of everything good. He had traveled up and down the land, doing all manner of evil. He had once been gone from home twenty-one years, without letting any of his friends know where he was. He had hardly seen the inside of a church a dozen times in fifty years. He would not allow his wife, who had once professed religion, to have a Bible in the house. He was the iron-bound captive of Satan, with a whole army of devils guarding his prison doors.

But a flash of light penetrated his cell, and an angel, in the person of a Christian merchant, at whose store the man was trading, smote him on the side one day with the question, "Why do n't you become a Christian?" In the utmost astonishment, the old sinner replied, "Do you think I could become a Christian?" "Yes, you can; of course you can," said the angel, the messenger.

A few days after, the Christian was passing the old man's house, and felt a strong impression that he ought to go in. The old man was very glad to see him. He was under deep conviction, and asked him to pray with him, and to bring the minister to see him. Both requests were readily granted. Both the minister and the merchant prayed with him, and he prayed aloud in their presence for himself. For about a week the old man was in the most awful agony on account of his sins, praying constantly, asking his wife's forgiveness for a thousand acts of cruelty and neglect, and imploring Divine pardon for this and that

sin which memory saw scattered along the track of sixty wicked years.

Such prayer and repentance bore the abundant fruits of peace and righteousness. One day he came into the store of his young friend, with his face radiant with the joy of heaven, and with his mouth full of the praises of God. For months after he did little else than go about the village, telling everybody what wonderful things God had done for his soul. The language of his heart was: "Now I know of a surety that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Satan and from all my sins."

Is that your testimony to-day, my brother? If not, will you not seek such an experience this very hour? Why languish in the prison of sin, when you may be free in Jesus Christ?

XVI.

THE FIERY FURNACE.

"Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."—DANIEL III, 25.

LET us imagine our text to be a mountain, and, climbing to its summit, let us take a bird's-eye view of our surroundings. We are in the midst of a vast plain, perfectly flat, stretching away in all directions toward the horizon. The plain is checked with grain-fields and orchards and vineyards and meadows and pastures, and dotted with villages and villas. Through the middle winds a majestic river, nearly a mile in width.

Right at our feet is the largest and most splendid city on which the sun ever shone. It covers an area of one hundred and twenty-five thousand acres. In shape, it is a perfect square. The distance around the square is fifty-six miles. The boundary is a mighty wall, three hundred and thirty-five feet high, and eighty-five feet thick. The top of the wall is a boulevard, a magnificent avenue, on which the millionaires can ride, in their gilded chariots, between majestic towers rising hundreds of feet above their heads. Through the wall are one hundred huge openings, closed with one hundred gates of solid brass, hinged to brazen posts and spanned by brazen beams. The space within the wall is a perfect checker-board. The squares which make up the board are six hundred

and seventy-six in number; and each square contains one hundred and eighty-five acres. Almost every square is filled with parks and gardens and flower-beds and fountains and statues and palaces and mansions. The lines which separate the squares are fifty broad avenues—twenty-five running east and west, and twenty-five running north and south. Each avenue begins and ends at a gate, and is fourteen miles long. Placed end to end, they would stretch through a distance of seven hundred miles.

The river passes through the city. Entering and departing, it creeps under the wall. While it is going through, it is kept in its proper place by two parallel walls. Each of these walls has twenty-five openings, corresponding with as many avenues. One avenue crosses the river on a bridge. Forty-eight wharves and twenty-four lines of ferry-boats satisfy the others.

The city has two buildings which surpass all the rest. On the western bank of the river is the Temple of Belus, or Tower of Babel; on the eastern is the palace of the king. The temple is six hundred and six feet high; the palace is seven miles and a half in circumference. The temple draws crowds of curious visitors, who climb to its top, by means of a winding stair-case, on foot, or on the backs of horses and mules. The court of the palace contains the Hanging-garden, where the queen entertains her friends, and imagines that she is living amid the groves of her native Median hills.

Looking down into the city, we see no signs of life. The queen is not in her garden. The crowds are not on the tower. The ferry-boats are not making their trips, but are moored to the silent wharves. The bridge feels no pressure of wheel or hoof. The streets

are silent. The parks are deserted. The temples are forsaken. The markets are empty. The mills are dumb. The kitchens are cold. The gates are unbarred. The sentinels are gone. All life seems to have fled. Mighty Babylon, with its swarming millions, looks like a tomb.

How can this strange phenomenon be explained? Look away to the southeast, five miles, to a part of the plain called Dura, and you will see the answer to your question. There scores of acres of ground are black with human beings. The city has literally dumped itself on the plain of Dura. Every inhabitant of Babylon that can move, or be moved, is at Dura. The world is at Dura. The world is at Dura by its representatives. Every race and nation and tribe and clan and city and village and hamlet, from Ethiopia to India and from the Caspian to the Mediterranean, has sent its chief men as delegates to this convention at Dura. Such a vast concourse of human beings the sun probably never looked upon before.

Out of this ocean of human heads rises a mound, or elevated platform, built of earth and brick, and faced with enameled tiles in black and orange and red and gold and yellow and blue and silver.

On the summit of the mound, under a canopy of satin and ostrich plumes, stands a throne of ebony, ivory, and gold, studded with all manner of precious stones. The throne is not empty. On it, clad in purple robes heavy with diamonds, with a sparkling diadem on his head, sits Nebuchadnezzar the Magnificent, the conqueror of nations, king of Babylon, and emperor of the world.

Behind the throne, on a huge pedestal, rises a colossal statue—a duplicate, in gold, of the king him-

self—a gold or gilded Nebuchadnezzar, ninety feet tall, including the pedestal, and nine feet thick from breast to back. It is a stupendous representation of the wealth and power and pride of that mighty despot, who has his iron-shod heel on the neck of the human race.

In an open space, a few hundred feet to the front, is an odd-looking structure built of hard-burned brick. Its base is a circle. Its top is a dome. It is about thirty feet high. From its top rises a short chimney, which sends forth a column of black smoke, with mingled sparks and tongues of fire. Through a door in front a couple of stout Ethiopian slaves, with masks to protect their faces against the intense heat, are stuffing in wood and pitch. That is Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace, of which you have heard so much. It was not built to smelt iron-ore, or to burn stone to lime, or to melt sand to glass, but to consume the bodies of men who dare to express opinions contrary to the tyrant's mind. Nebuchadnezzar does not hang, or stab, or behead, or poison his enemies; he turns them into smoke and ashes in this awful heat.

But what does all this mean? Nebuchadnezzar has lately returned from the conquest of Egypt and Palestine, laden with spoil and puffed up with pride and self-conceit. Flattered by his courtiers and applauded by his soldiers, he imagines that he is a god, and resolves to compel the world to worship him. So he has erected this statue, like one which he once saw in a dream, with head and face copied from his own; and this is the day appointed for its dedication.

Loud-voiced heralds have gone everywhere, shouting, through the brazen throats of their trumpets, that, when the royal bands begin to play, every human

being shall fall down and worship the golden image which stands on the mound, and the king who sits on his throne in front; and that "whoever falleth not down and worshipeth, shall the same hour be cast into the midst of the burning, fiery furnace."

Silence like that of the grave follows this proclamation. The interval seems very long. Suddenly the stillness is broken by a mighty burst of martial melody. Every instrument in the king's bands peals forth its peculiar tone. The blended strains, like a cyclone of sound, roll out over the plain, and strike against the ramparts of the empty city.

For a second every person in that vast assembly stands motionless, looking at the image and the ascending smoke of the fiery furnace. Worship, or burn, is the only choice. The decision is quickly made; in most cases, it was made in advance. Down goes the world on its knees, on its face, with its face in the dust, worshiping a sinful man as though he were Almighty God. Heaven had never looked down on such outrageous idolatry and blasphemy. It is a wonder that the Sovereign of the skies did not send down a legion of angels, with flaming swords, to take vengeance on that impious multitude and their still more impious king. If God's ways were like men's ways, that would have been the concluding scene of the dedication of Nebuchadnezzar's golden image. If God were like you and me, Dura would have been turned into a grave-yard, and there would have been no living to bury the dead.

But the All-wise had a better plan for vindicating his honor and establishing the truth. There were three men who would not worship the golden image—only three among those millions. Their names—

which the world will never forget—were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. They were Jews. They were servants of the living God. They knew that idolatry was a grievous sin; and they preferred death in its most horrible form to sin of any kind. Clearly understanding the consequences, they stood while all the world bowed down.

They did not escape detection. They did not try to hide. Being officers of the government, they stood near the throne. Some of their fellow-officers saw them standing, and informed the king, saying: "O king, live forever. There are certain Jews whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; these men, O king, have not regarded thee; they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."

When the king heard those words, his proud heart was stung to the quick, and his passions were kindled into a furious rage. Fairly white with anger, he commanded the three Jews to be seized, and to be dragged to the foot of the throne. Glaring at them, with the fire of hell in his eyes, he hissed out these words: "Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up? Now if ye be ready to fall down and worship, well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that god that shall deliver you out of my hands?" Those men of God were not terrified in the least. They had decided what to do, and had counted the cost. Standing between the red-hot furnace and the angry king, they calmly made answer: "O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom

we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."

Then the despot's fury knew no bounds. Those puny men had dared to defy him to his face, in the presence of the world. They should feel the full force of his mighty hand. He commanded the furnace to be charged to the full with the most combustible materials, till it was as hot as wood and pitch and oil and sulphur could make it. Back rolled the crowd, driven by the heat, leaving a large, open circle around the belching volcano. The three young men stood calmly watching the preparation for themselves of a most horrible death.

When the furnace was as much like hell as it could be made, the king ordered several of the strongest men in his army to bind the three Jews and to cast them into the fire. I can imagine how it was done. Yonder is the furnace, in the center of a circle which it has made for itself by pushing the crowd back with volley after volley of overpowering heat. Through its chimney it vomits clouds of inky smoke and tongues of livid flame. It roars as though a hundred demons, confined within, were suffering punishment for their sins. Half-way from its base to its top is a large opening, closed with an iron door, which the heat has painted a fiery red. Leading up to the door is an inclined plane of brick and earth. The martyrs, with their hands bound behind their backs, are pushed up the slope, side by side, by the soldiers walking behind them, and using them as shields against the heat. When the door is reached, the Ethiopians swing it

open with iron hooks, and, at the same instant, the soldiers give the condemned a sudden and violent push. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego fall down "into the midst of the fire;" and the soldiers, who pushed them in, fall back dead, slain by the hot breath of the furnace. The frightened slaves flee as from the mouth of hell, chased by the angry flames which leap from the open door.

Then took place one of the most marvelous events ever recorded in the annals of the human race. According to the Greek translation of the Old Testament, from which our Savior always quoted, strains of sweetest music were heard to issue from the furnace, above the roaring of the flames. It was the voice of singing. The three young men, with a fourth, of glorious aspect and celestial voice, were walking to and fro in the furnace, as though it were the Garden of Eden, singing a song of praise and joyful adoration. Such music had never been heard on earth. The people listened in silent wonder. The king's musicians dropped their instruments, and gazed, spellbound, into the fire. The king heard and saw and wondered. He was the only one who dared to break the stillness of that awful hour. Springing to his feet, he called to his counselors, "Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?" They meekly answered, "Yes." "But," said he, "I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God." Then that proud monarch, conqueror of nations and sovereign of the world, descended from his throne, and, going as near as he could to the door of the furnace, humbly addressed the men whom he had tried to murder: "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego,

ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither." The song ceased. The Divine being vanished. The three young men turned their faces toward this world. They walked out of their Eden through the red-hot furnace-door. They stepped over the charred and smoking bodies of their would-be executioners. They stood, as loyal subjects, before their king.

Then an inquest was held upon the bodies of the three Jews by the king and all the princes, governors, captains, and counselors. The unanimous verdict of that august jury was that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had not sustained the slightest injury; that not a hair of their heads had been singed, or a thread of their garments scorched; neither could any smell of fire be detected upon them. Immediately the king, ashamed of his idolatry and his blasphemous self-conceit, uttered these words to the assembled millions through his loud-voiced heralds: "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent his angel and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god except their own God. Therefore I make a decree, that every people, nation, and langauge, which speak anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill; because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort." Thus a convention which the devil had called to build up his kingdom was, by the providence of God, turned into a general conference, to promote the cause of truth and righteousness.

Before we proceed to evolve from the text and

context the lessons which they contain, I wish to call your attention to a remarkable discovery which confirms the truth of this portion of God's Word. Infidels make sport of the story of Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace, and the three young men who came out of it unharmed. They not only say that such a miracle could not be, but pronounce the whole account of the worship of the image and the casting of men into the furnace because they would not worship, improbable and absurd. A few years ago an archæologist, digging in the ruins of ancient Babylon, unearthed a signet-ring, which seems to have been preserved by the providence of God on purpose to confound unbelievers. It is now the property of an English gentleman named Burgoyne. On it is a very delicate carving, representing a gigantic idol and an immense crowd of worshipers all around. On one side is a furnace, in which three men are standing. That wonderful old gem, hidden away for thousands of years, and now brought forth to the light unchanged, is almost as strong a confirmation of the story of the three Hebrews in the fiery furnace as though it were a photograph taken on the spot.

That portion of the Euphrates valley which lies about five miles to the southeast of the ruins of Babylon is still called "Dura" by the natives. Rising out of it is a large, square mound, twenty feet high, bearing on its top a huge mass of brick-work, resembling the pedestal of a colossal statue. When the traveler looks upon that structure, the thought instantly strikes him, "This is where Nebuchadnezzar's golden image stood." Diodorus Siculus, the famous historian and traveler, visiting Babylon nearly two thousand years ago, saw a huge golden statue, containing fifteen

million dollars' worth of the precious metal. His description makes us believe that he was looking upon the identical image which Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to worship. All the voices of history and all the echoes of archæological science contradict the falsehoods of infidelity.

But what are the lessons which are suggested and enforced by the text? A very important lesson is this: God is always on the side of those who trust and obey him. He takes care of his own; and his own are those who will do exactly right. It is always best to do right, and not make the slightest compromise with sin. Imagine, if you can, the situation of those young men. On one side was a golden image, before which all the world was kneeling, probably, with little or no consciousness of wrong in so doing. On the other side was a red-hot furnace, with its fiery jaws open to devour the helpless victims of a heartless tyrant's hotter hate. They had a moment in which to decide whether they would go into the furnace or bend the knee in real, or seeming, worship before the statue of their king. They instantly decided that to be burned alive was a smaller evil than to transgress the law of God. The All-wise set the seal of his approval on their decision by performing a stupendous miracle in their behalf in the eyes of all the world.

When will the children of men learn that nothing is harmful but sin? To knowingly deviate, in the slightest degree, from the straight line of absolute right is worse than to suffer all possible earthly loss or pain. If it is ever best to bend, to the right or left, from the straight line of right, by so much as the thickness of a hair, then right is not right, and God is not God, and the only religion is atheism. When solicited

to perform any action, the first question you should ask is, "Is it right?" If the most accurate answer you can find is "No," do not perform it, though the world promise you all possible riches and honors and pleasures if you consent, and Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace opens its jaws to swallow you if you refuse.

The hardest lesson mankind has to learn is that it is always best to do right. There are many of the professed children of God who have not yet discovered that great, eternal, bed-rock truth. Many of them, standing between Nebuchadnezzar's image and his flaming furnace, bow to the former to escape the latter, and call such yielding a larger liberty and a broader faith.

Sometimes the furnace is financial loss. A Christian merchant finds himself where, if he does exactly what his conscience says is right, he will, apparently, lose a large amount of valuable trade. But if he bends a little, the world will say, "Well done;" the devil will say, "Business is business," and the jingling silver will make sweet music in his till. A customer asks, "Is this piece of goods all wool?" If the merchant tells the truth, and says "No," the customer will go away with his money, and be worse cheated across the street. If he says "Yes," the customer will buy the goods, and never know that he has been deceived.

A merchant has a commodity on his shelves, for which there is a large demand, and which yields an immense profit. Its use is harmful in every case; and to many, especially the young, it is positively ruinous and damning. Ought a Christian man to sell such stuff? Is it exactly right? His conscience answers, "No." But the devil says: "Think how much you will lose if your abandon this part of your business.

Besides, if you do not sell, others will; you might as well have your share of the profit, and give a part to the Church, as to let your ungodly neighbor have it all."

A man, with a family to support, holds a position which pays him well. By and by his employer says, "You must work Sundays, or surrender your place to another." Is it right to labor on the Lord's-day and never go to Church? The fourth commandment is a perfect answer to that question. But if he does not consent to do wrong, he will lose his place, and his children may cry for bread. He must live. The three Hebrews were in a worse strait than that. They might have said: "We must live. If we refuse to bow before the golden image, we shall be thrown into the fire." Were they wise in choosing the fire? God says they were. It is better to suffer the worst losses and the most dreadful agonies than to commit the smallest sin.

But God did not let the Hebrews suffer because of their devotion to him. He let their faith be tried to the extent of being cast into the fire, and then brought them out alive, and gave them back all they had sacrificed, with added honors before all the world. It is often so to-day. I know a grocer who abandoned the sale of tobacco and cigars because he became convinced that it was wrong, though they yielded him an annual profit of three thousand dollars. The result was that the first year after he made the sacrifice the profits of his business were more than three thousand dollars above what they had ever been before; and, during these years of financial distress, he has been most marvelously prospered amid the ruins of many of his competitors.

God does not always save his people from the fire. He has permitted millions of his faithful ones to be martyred. But the martyrs were not really harmed. Had the flames devoured Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, the chariots of the skies would have borne their souls straight to Paradise, there to "drink of the river of" God's "pleasures" for ever and ever. Whether the Almighty, All-wise Ruler of the Universe prevents or permits worldly suffering and loss, he always fulfills the promises: "The Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly;" and "All things work together for good to them that love God."

Another important lesson of the text is, that the way to convert the world to Christ is for all Christians to be like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Nebuchadnezzar was so impressed by the fortitude of those men, and by the deliverance which God gave them, that he professedly, at least, embraced the true religion, and commanded all his subjects to do the same. The world is not to be won by compromising with sin (or by keeping abreast of the times, as some weak-kneed professors of religion call it), but by living up to the letter of the law of God, in the spirit of the gospel of Christ.

If all Christians would realize that the printing-press and the railroad and the telegraph and the telephone and the trolley-cars have not abolished the Ten Commandments; if they would stop patronizing those great anti-Christian institutions, the Sunday newspaper and the Sunday cars; if they would let alone all sinful and doubtful amusements, such as the Church has always condemned; if they would stop

all Sunday labor, at the risk of poverty and beggary; if they would make Methodist and Presbyterian and Baptist synonyms for honesty and virtue and truth and love,—society would soon be transformed, and "the kingdoms of this world" would "become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ." The Church which is to conquer the world is the Church whose members, like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, would rather go into Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace than to do the smallest wrong.

The grand lesson taught by the text is, that the greatest spiritual blessings come to those who are in the furnace of worldly affliction. When the three Hebrews had been cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace, heated to seven times its wonted degree of fury, "then Nebuchadnezzar, the king, was astonished, and rose up in haste and spake, and said unto his counselors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?" They answered, "True, O king." He answered, and said: "Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God." In the furnace, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego saw their Redeemer, and walked in joyous communion with the Lord of glory. That must have been the most blessed and glorious hour of their lives. They must have looked back upon that time, in after years, and thanked God that they were permitted to be cast into Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace. They must have told their children's children and listening thousands of pious worshipers, with voices choking with estatic emotion and with eyes blinded with tears of rapturous joy, how, when they stood alone against the wrath of the king and the judgment of a hostile world, and suffered

themselves to be cast into a raging furnace, belching out tongues of flame and clouds of smoke, they found the place a veritable heaven, and saw and walked and talked with the eternal Son of God. If Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had not gone into the furnace, how much they would have missed! how little they would have known of God, compared with what they did learn of him! They had abundant reason to thank God for the furnace as long as they lived; and they will thank God for the furnace through eternal ages.

If you have never been in the furnace of affliction, you have not yet seen the sweetest and most wonderful side of the Divine character. God makes the most intimate and delightful revelations of himself only to those who are in the furnace; and the hotter the fire, the brighter and more glorious "the form of the Fourth" appears. In fact, you can not really know God until you know him as the Comforter; and you can not know him as the Comforter till he is revealed to you in the lurid flames of the sevenfold-heated furnace of affliction.

Many of the children of men can not see God till they are physically blind; they do not hear God till they are physically deaf; they do not touch the Unseen Hand till the hand of flesh is paralyzed; they do not walk in the path to heaven till they have lost the power of physical locomotion; they do not fly toward the mount of God till the wings of all their earthly ambitions have been clipped; they do not become rich till they have been reduced to extremest poverty; they do not lay up treasures in heaven till they have lost all the treasures of earth; they do not walk with God till they walk in the midst of the fire.

I had a parishioner. He had health, a pleasant

home, wife, children, an honorable occupation, a large income. He professed religion, but knew little of its sweets and joys. Now he is widowed, childless, poor, crippled, blind. But he is one of the happiest of mortals. In the furnace of affliction he found God, and now walks and talks with him every day.

Do not invent, or borrow, trouble. Do not imagine that you are afflicted when you are not. Do not build your own furnace, or light your own fire. Do not go to Nebuchadnezzar and ask him to burn you. Do not jump into the fire. Do not be so foolish as to think that any kind of fire, in this world or the other, can purify your soul. Never forget, for a moment, that the blood of Jesus Christ alone cleanses from all sin. Then, if God permits you to be cast into the furnace of affliction, "count it all joy," knowing that the form of the Fourth will be with you, and that out of the furnace you will come at the right moment to be promoted to higher honors in the kingdom of heaven.

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."

XVII.

DANIEL IN THE LION'S DEN.

"Is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee?"—DANIEL VI, 20.

LET us transport ourselves in imagination to the valley of the Euphrates, and back into antiquity twenty-four hundred years. Standing on the hills which bound the valley on the west, we look down upon the largest city in all the world and in all the ages. Descending from the grassy highlands, we strike a dusty road, which leads us across a perfectly level plain, through crowds of men and animals going and coming, till we reach the city wall.

What a city! What a wall! Look up! From the ground where we stand to the top of the parapet the distance is three hundred and thirty-five feet. Still higher shoot many massive towers, which seem to reach the clouds. Directly in our front is a gate-way—a huge opening through the wall, flanked and capped folded back to let the tides of commerce roll in and out. to the columns are doors of brass, with many leaves, folded back to let the tides of comerce roll in and out. Half a mile to the right, and half a mile to the left, you will find another gate just like this. If you walk along, parallel with the wall, seven miles in this direction, you will pass twelve gates just like this, and come to the corner where the wall turns toward the east. Turning with the wall, and walking fourteen miles, past twenty-five gates, and swimming the river

Euphrates midway, you will come to the second corner, where the wall turns toward the north. Following the wall thirty-five miles further, passing sixty-two gates, turning two corners, and re-swimming the river, you will find yourself at the point where we are now standing.

Resting a moment from our imaginary walk of fifty-six miles, we pass through the gate-way into the city. We must walk eighty-five feet to get through the thickness of the wall. Emerging at length into the bright light, we find ourselves in a magnificent avenue, which stretches before us till its two sides seem to come together in an invisible point. All the way the avenue is lined with parks and gardens and fountains and statues and triumphal arches and monuments and mansions and palaces and temples.

Six miles from the gate where we entered, we come to the loftiest building in the city. It is the Temple of Belus, once the Tower of Babel. It rises, in eight painted stories, six hundred and six feet high, from a platform covering thirty-three acres. On its top is a place of worship and an astronomical observatory. Up and down the broad stair-case, or inclined plane, which winds gradually around the building, we can see crowds of visitors going and coming, some on foot, others on the backs of horses and mules.

Half a mile further on we come to a wall and a gate. Passing through, we are on a bridge spanning the mighty Euphrates. Now we are at the middle. Look up and down this "father of waters." For fourteen miles it rolls through the city, entering and departing under enormous arches in the walls. Twin walls confine its turbulent tide, each wall pierced with twenty-five gateways. Twenty-four of the pairs of

gateways have each two wharves and a ferry. Beneath this bridge there is a tunnel under the river. Bridge, tunnel, wharves, ferries, and river are alive with pleasure and business.

On the river's eastern bank we stand in front of the largest palace ever built. Its name is, "The Admiration of Mankind." It is seven miles and a half in circuit. It is surrounded by three concentric walls. It has many gates of solid brass, some of them so large that machinery is required to make them swing on their hinges. It contains in its central court the famous "hanging-garden," which is written among the world's "Seven Wonders." It is filled with splendors of architecture and art, which no one can describe who has seen them, and which no one can imagine who has not.

But what has all this to do with our text? I will tell you. The man who uttered the question of the text lives in this palace. He is its owner and lord. His name is Darius. In secular history he is called Cyaxeres. He is king of the Medes and Persians. Only a few months ago his army, under the command of Cyrus, his nephew and son-in-law, took this city, Babylon, and he ascended its throne as sovereign of the world. Almost the entire civilized world acknowledged his authority.

That he might the better govern his far-reaching domains, Darius divided them into one hundred and twenty provinces, with a governor, or satrap, over every one. That he might know what the governors were doing, and that they might be held to a strict account, Darius appointed three men, whom he called Presidents, to whom the governors should report, and whose orders they should obey. The first and chief of

these presidents was Daniel, the Jew, the man who had interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's dreams and read the hand-writing on the wall of Belshazzar's banqueting-hall.

Daniel discharged the duties of his high office with such consummate wisdom and such absolute fidelity and honesty that he won the confidence and love of the king, who resolved to advance him to still higher honors. But while the king loved him, the other presidents and all the governors and politicians envied and hated him. At length they laid their heads together, and resolved to ruin him. For a long time they watched him, and set spies and detectives upon his track, that they might discover some act or word which they could twist into an accusation against his honesty or his ability. But his statesmanship was so perfect and his character was so absolutely spotless that they could not find the shadow of anything against him.

One day the politicians met to see if they could contrive any way to ruin the great statesman. It was their unanimous conclusion that his only vulnerable point was his religion. Perhaps they could catch him there. At length a scheme was concocted. In a body they went into the presence of the king, and, with hearts and faces full of hypocrisy, told him that "all the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counselors, and the captains" had agreed together to request him to enact a royal statute that, for the space of thirty days, the king should be the only object of worship throughout the wide extent of the Medo-Persian realm; and that whosoever should dare to pray to any other God, should be cast into the den of lions.

The king, who was a vain old man, readily consented, not dreaming what his flatterers really intended. The blasphemous statute was written out by a scribe, and signed and sealed by the king. It was now a law, and, according to the constitution of the Medes and Persians, could never be repealed or changed.

The conspirators went away in high glee. The decree was posted on the palace gate. Daniel paused and read it as he came out on his way to his home. What did he do? What would you have done if you had been in his place? To pray, or not to pray, that was the question in the great statesman's mind. To pray would be to lose his position, his honors, his wealth, his opportunities to do good, his life. To pray would be to be dragged from his mansion, amid the scoffs and jeers of his enemies, and to be cast alive into a den of hungry lions. To pray would be to lose everything. Could not such a man as he was, with all the spiritual capital which he had laid up in sixty years of communion with God, live thirty days without prayer? Was he so weak, after more than half a century of victorious wrestling with sin and temptation, that he could not exist four weeks if he did not pray? His instant answer was, "I can not live one day without praying morning, noon, and night." At that moment the tempter must have injected a very subtle suggestion into his mind: "Why can you not pray silently in the darkness of your closet, till the danger is past? God can see and hear and will be satisfied, your enemies will be baffled, and your valuable life will be preserved." The old statesman saw the fallacy of Satan's argument. Being accustomed to pray in the sight and hearing of others, if he should

pray in silence and darkness he would deny God before all the world, and God would cast him off forever.

His mind was made up. He must continue to pray just as he always had. To pray would only be to lose his life. Not to pray would be to lose his soul. So, turning away from the pillar where the decree was posted, he hurried to his house. He went up into his chamber. He opened his windows toward the Holy City. He dropped on his knees. He poured out his soul in audible prayer to the God of his fathers. That was in the evening. He prayed in like manner the next morning, and again at noon.

His enemies, the envious politicians, skulking under his windows, heard him pray. Their delight knew no bounds. Now they had the object of their bitterest hatred in their power. The next morning they appeared in full force before the king. "Hast thou not signed a decree that every man that shall ask a petition of any God or man within thirty days, save of thee, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions?" "The thing is true," answered the king, "according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not." "Well," they said, "we have found a man who regardeth not thee or thy decree which thou hast signed, but prayeth three times a day."

When the king heard the name of the accused, he turned pale and shook with fear. He saw the trap into which he had fallen. He blamed himself for his folly. He refused to sign the death-warrant of his beloved counselor and friend. He angrily drove the accusers from his presence. He spent the whole day consulting the lawyers and searching the law-books to discover some way of evading the decree, and saving the life of the best and wisest man in the world.

But he was baffled at every step. Night brought the accusers again into his presence, more determined than before. They knew they had the law on their side, and that the king must yield. They insisted that the constitution of the Medo-Persian Empire must be maintained, and that the decree must be executed to the letter against the man who dared to pray. The king could hold out no longer. With the greatest reluctance he affixed his name and the great seal of the empire to the warrant ordering Daniel to be cast into the den of lions.

In imagination I see a company of men gathered in one of the courts of the imperial palace. It is night. The flaring flames of many smoking torches reveal the rich costumes and savage faces of the politicians of Babylon. I also see an old man firmly held in the grip of four stout soldiers. Two men, with crow-bars, pry up from the pavement a huge marble slab. A black hole appears, out of which rise stenchful vapors and savage growls. The old man is pushed to the hole. Ropes are placed under his arms. He is lifted from his feet and dropped into the abyss. The soldiers rapidly lower him into the darkness. The burden touches bottom. The ropes are shaken out and pulled up. The slab is pried back into its place. One of the presidents holds a stick of sealing-wax in the flames of a torch, till it melts, and then smears the soft paste over the crack in the pavement. At the same instant he presses against the yielding wax the king's signet-ring, making an impression which it is death to break.

Daniel is sealed up in the lion's den, like a corpse in a tomb. Let us go down into the den. Stone and seal and laws of the Medes and Persians can not

hinder us, for we are phantoms flitting in a by-gone age. Here we are. Where are we? We expected to be plunged in inky blackness. Instead of that, we are in a light so intensely bright that we are compelled to shade our faces with our hands. As soon as we are able to open our dazzled eyes, we look around. The place is a subterranean cell, built of hard-burned brick. The atmosphere is foul and damp. A little fresh air comes in through a grated window. The floor is thickly strewn with human bones—thighs, and spines and ribs and grinning skulls. In the center stands a being in human form, clad in a long, flowing robe, so white that, in comparison, the snow which covers the Alpine mountain peaks would look gray and brown. From face and hands and body and feet stream floods of unearthly light. In front stands the old statesman and prophet, gazing in rapture at this messenger from the presence of the King of heaven. Behind, blinking and purring, crouch half a score of the largest and most ferocious lions. Ferocious and hungry they were. But now they are as gentle as kittens or lambs. The left hand of the angel is laid on the mouth of the nearest lion. The other is extended toward the prophet.

That night which Daniel spent in the lion's den must have been the most blessed and glorious in all his life. The consciousness of having done right, the manifest approval of his God, and the presence of that radiant being, right from the celestial courts, must have made the noisome hole, where so many wretched men had been torn in pieces and devoured, the very vestibule of heaven.

Who do you think that angel was? I do not know. But I think he was the same who wrestled with Jacob

at Jabbok, who led the children of Israel through the wilderness, who appeared to Joshua on the plains of Jericho, and who walked with the three Hebrews in the flames of Nebuchadnezzar's furnace. I believe that he was infinitely greater than a mere angel; that he was the eternal Son of God, afterward incarnated and named Jesus Christ. What words passed between him and Daniel concerning the scheme of redemption and the future triumphs of the Church you may ask the old prophet, when you meet him erelong on one of the gold-paved avenues of the New Jerusalem.

That night, so blissful to Daniel, was torture to the king. Darius could not sleep. He was tormented with remorse. His silly vanity had brought ruin and death to his wisest counselor and dearest friend. He passed the long hours pacing up and down in his gilded chamber, beating his breast, tearing his hair, and uttering bitter reproaches against himself. The alabaster floor seemed to heave and burn under his feet. The ivory ceiling seemed to bend and wave as though it would fall on his head. The statues and paintings of men and beasts, which adorned the walls, seemed to be living beings, pointing and scowling at him, and crying, "You have murdered your friend." If ever there was a heaven on earth, it was the lion's den the night it was occupied by Daniel and the angel. If ever there was a hell on earth, it was Nebuchadnezzar's palace, the night it was occupied by King Darius and his remorseful conscience.

There was one slender ray of hope to temper the blackness of the king's despair. It was possible that Daniel's God would save him from the lions. And so as soon as the first red-coated outrider, on the top of

the eastern hills, heralded the approach of the king of day, the king of Babylon was standing above the den. With impatient words he ordered the men to pry up the stone. Bending over the hole, he shouted down, in tones of anguish and almost despair, "O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?" For a moment there was no response but the echo of the king's voice. Then, in a deep, confident, joyful, triumphant swell, these words came back, as from the other world: "My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt."

The king's joy was as great as his sorrow had been. At his command, ropes were brought, and Daniel was lifted up into the land of the living. The same day the lions, which had not opened their mouths against the servant of God, breakfasted on the well-fattened bodies of the politicians who had plotted his destruction.

In these days of light and liberty, God's people are in no danger of being cast into lions' dens, in the literal meaning of those words, but they often are in a spiritual sense. If you will listen, I will talk to you about some of the dens of lions into which the holiest men and women have been thrown. The first is the den of Temptation. The Bible tells us that the devil, the archtempter, "as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour." The Christian is frequently assailed, not by one devil, but by a legion of devils. He is dropped into a dark hole strewn with the bones of men naturally as good as he,

whom the same lions, which now glare and snap their teeth at him from all sides, have torn in pieces and devoured.

Every man has his peculiar temptations. One is tempted to doubt the truth of the Bible and the reality of religion. Dr. Edward Payson, one of the holiest and most gifted ministers who ever lived, once declared that Satan had often injected into his mind skeptical objections against the truth of the Scriptures a thousand times more subtle and plausible than any which he had ever found in any infidel book. Another is tempted to question God's goodness to him. The devil says: "God loves other souls; he does not love you. He knows whether you will be saved or not. The fact is, there is no salvation for you. It has been foreordained that you shall be damned." Another is tempted to lust and passion; another to vanity, or ambition, or avarice, or revenge; another to presumption, or spiritual pride, or fanaticism. Still another is tempted to throw away eternal life for some present good which seems very great.

We stand above the sealed mouth of a den of lions, in which one of God's children is confined, while all hell holds jubilee over his supposed destruction. He is a young convert, recently saved from the sin of drunkenness. The old appetite is subdued, but not annihilated. It roars and gnashes its teeth at him, like a desertful of hungry lions. To drop the figure and speak the simple truth—he is compelled to pass the open door of a saloon. A fiend in human shape steps out on the sidewalk in front of him, and holds out in one hand a glass of whisky, and in the other a ten-dollar bill. He can have them both, if he will. He is very poor; he needs the money. His old appetite

wakes up at the smell of the liquor; every fiber of his body craves the alcohol. Surely the lions of temptation will devour his soul. Nothing can save him from their teeth.

Be not too hasty in your conclusion. I will uncover the den of this modern Daniel, and see if he is alive. "O servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee?" Hear his answer: "My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me." The plain, prosaic fact about the man is, that he turned from the door of the saloon, and walked away without touching the whisky. That was almost as great a miracle as the one recorded in the Book of Daniel. I really believe that if you had been on the street in front of that saloon, and had been gifted with supernatural sight, you would have seen an angel standing between that tempted man and the tempter, between the converted drunkard and the rumseller, between Daniel and the lions.

My Christian brother or sister, "is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions" of temptation, whatever thy peculiar temptation may be? I trust that your experience and faith are such that you can confidently and triumphantly answer, "My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me."

Another den of lions, into which the Christian may be cast, is Affliction. It is a black and noisome hole, of which no one can think without a shudder. In the darkness the servant of God sees the fiery eyes of many fierce and hungry lions glaring at him, as they crouch to spring at his throat. There is the lion of bereavement—the loss, by death, of a friend dearer

than life itself. There is the lion of financial disaster—the wrecking of a fortune and the incoming of destitution and beggary. There is the gaunt and staring lion of sickness—every breath a groan, and life an intolerable burden. There is the lion of slander and misrepresentation—a reputation ruined and a good name unjustly spattered with mud and slime. Were you ever in such a place?

I knew a tender woman who was cast into the den of lions. Three beautiful children went in quick succession to the grave. Her husband, a good, kind, loving man, on whose strong arm she delighted to lean, went out to his work one morning. He had to cross a railroad track a few rods from the dwelling. In some way he was surprised and killed by a passing train. Before the parting kiss was dry on the woman's cheek, his mangled remains were brought into the house. In a moment her "soul" was "among lions." Did they tear her in pieces and devour her? Was she utterly crushed? Did her reason give way? Was she insane with grief? Did she rebel against Divine providence? Did she charge God with cruelty and injustice? No. Her spirit was sweet as heaven. Her resignation was perfect. Her grief was as sharp as death; but she smiled through her tears, and declared that God was just and good, that he was still her kind, loving, Heavenly Father. Had you been present that morning, and said to her, "O servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee?" her instant answer would have been, "My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me." Because the angel of the covenant was with her, standing between her and the lions, and making

it light all about her, that day of awful bereavement was one of the most glorious days in all her life.

To all in this congregation whose souls have ever been among the lions of sorrow and affliction, I put the question of Darius to Daniel, "Is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee?"

Death is a den of lions. We must all be cast into that den. How terrific death is to the soul who confronts it unprepared. For an unconverted man to face death, in the full use of his senses, and not be overwhelmed with terror, is simply impossible. I saw an old man in the article of death. He had served God long and faithfully, and had turned many sinners to righteousness. Now the time had come to test the doctrines which he had preached to others. His soul was among lions. His chamber was their den. He was in extreme physical suffering, amounting to an agony of torture. And yet, in the brief interval between the paroxysms of pain, he was shouting aloud for joy; he was too happy to contain himself. I bent above him and said, "O servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee?" With a smile of holy rapture on his face, he exclaimed, "My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me!" He died. But, dying, he triumphed over death. To him death had no sting.

In imagination I see a martyr on his way to the stake. His imprisonment has been long and bitter. His examinations by the inquisitors have been many and excruciating. All the tortures which human ingenuity could invent, short of death, have been inflicted upon him. Now he is to go up in a chariot of fire. The streets, along which he is conducted, and the

housetops above, swarm with thousands of spectators, who hurl insults at his head, and the vilest words of hatred and reproach. He can not hear one friendly voice. He can not see one friendly face.

The grand square in the center of the city is reached. He is bound to a post with an iron chain. The faggots are heaped about him. The torch is applied. The angry flames leap toward the sky, while the mob shout in devilish glee. Surely his soul is among lions. But do they harm him? Look at his face. It wears an expression of ecstatic joy. He seems not to feel the fire which is consuming his flesh. Go as near as the flames and smoke will permit, and speak to him, "O servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee?" He turns his face, glowing with celestial light, and answers, "My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me." If God should open your eyes, as he did the eyes of Elisha's servant, you would see angels all about the martyr, sustaining his soul, and making him insensible to pain. The flames are permitted to destroy his body; but the angels bear his soul to the paradise of God. Though his enemies are permitted to take his life, the angel of God protects him as really as he did Daniel in the den of lions at Babylon.

If you would have the angel of God stand between you and the lions of temptation, sorrow, and death, and shut their mouths so that they can do you no harm, two things are necessary: First, you must serve God continually. Darius said to Daniel, "Is thy God, whom thou servest *continually*, able to deliver thee?" You must serve God continually. Your religion must be an every-day matter, if you would have it

do you any good in times of trial, disaster, and dissolution. The man who endures fierce temptation is the man who walks close with God when the skies are bright. The man who bears up under overwhelming sorrow is the man who watches and prays and performs every duty when the times are prosperous. The man who dies well is the man who has lived well. Because Daniel served God in the palace and the council-chamber, God's angel was with him in the den of lions. If Daniel had been a corrupt politician, no amount of praying would have saved him from the teeth of the lions.

Second, if you would be delivered from the lions, you must, like Daniel, believe in your God. The inspired narrative says: "So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God." It was faith that saved him, as says the Book of Hebrews: "Who, through faith, stopped the mouths of lions." Faith in God will save you in the hour of fierce temptation, when the lions of passion and appetite and ambition and skepticism are all about you. Faith in God will save you in the hour of sorrow, when the lions of adversity are ready to tear you in pieces. Faith in God will save you in that solemn final hour, when the strong lions of death roar at you out of the awful darkness of the tomb. Then the angel of the Lord will be with you; "at evening-time it shall be light;" and the evening of time shall melt away into the morning of eternity.

"Lord, give us such a faith as this,
And then, whate'er may come,
We'll taste, e'en here, the hallowed bliss
Of an eternal home."

XVIII.

THE TENTH FOR GOD.

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of Heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it."—MALACHI III, 10.

THESE are the words of God to Israel through Malachi. Malachi walked with God about four hundred years before the birth of Christ. He was on such intimate terms with the Great King that the secrets of heaven were revealed to him. He was a prophet. He was the last who prophesied under the Old Testament dispensation. In the time of his prophecy the Jews had returned from the seventy years of captivity in Babylonia, and were dwelling in the land which God had given to their fathers. They were in the enjoyment of personal and religious liberty. They were no longer slaves; and they could worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences in their own temple, which had been rebuilt on the very spot where it had formerly stood. But they were very far from being prosperous and happy. The times were very calamitous. Their national independence was gone. Heathen kings were their masters. They were hated and persecuted by the pagan tribes who dwelt around them. The soil which they tilled yielded a scanty return for their labor. The grapes withered upon the vines before they were ripe. Locusts devoured the grain in their fields. Drought destroyed

the herbage on which their flocks and herds depended, and dried up their fountains and wells; and famine, gaunt and bony, ever stared them in the face. Their condition was worse, in many respects, than when they were captives in Babylon. For then they had plenty to eat and drink; and many of them were rich in silver and gold. Now they suffered the want of all things; and life seemed a heavy burden, instead of a joy and a blessing.

Amid these circumstances, their hearts and mouths were filled with murmuring and bitter complaints. They kept saying to themselves and to each other: "It does not pay to serve the Lord. There is no good in fasting and prayer. The wicked fare better than the righteous. The idolatrous heathen are more prosperous than we. If there is a God in heaven, why does he permit us to suffer such afflictions?" They did not seem to know why they were weak and poor and despised and afflicted, instead of being strong and rich and honored and prosperous. And yet there was a reason which they might have easily discovered. Malachi saw what was the cause of all the trouble under which his countrymen were groaning and grumbling, and made it known to them in plain and honest words. He said: "It is your own fault that all these afflictions have come upon you. Ye have turned your backs on God; and therefore he has turned his back on you. Ye have robbed God, even this whole nation. Ye say, 'How have we robbed God?' I will tell you. Ye have withheld the tithes which the law of Moses commanded to be paid into the treasury of the Lord. Therefore ye are cursed with a curse. As long as ye withhold the tithes, God will withhold the rain, and will send locusts, mildew, and blight. Return unto the Lord,

and he will return unto you. 'Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in my house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.' "

There was a rigid law in Israel that every man should give one-tenth of his income, from all sources, each year, to the Lord, for the support of the Church. If, when the tithing season came, a man found that he had raised one hundred bushels of wheat, he had to measure out ten bushels, and carry or send it up to the temple of the Lord. He must do the same for all his grain and fruit. At the same time he would shut up in a pen all the cattle, sheep, goats, and other clean animals born on his land during the year, or obtained by purchase, and, then, while one of his servants drove them through a narrow gate, one by one, he would touch every tenth creature with a rod dipped in red paint. Every ox, cow, calf, sheep, lamb, goat, or kid which bore the red spot belonged to God. According to the same rule, I suppose, one-tenth of the money which came into any man's hands, in the course of the year, was put into the Lord's treasury in the temple.

We should consider ourselves greatly oppressed if we had to give over to the Church every tenth dollar which came into our hands. But that is just what God required of his ancient people; and whenever they failed to keep this law, he called them robbers, and punished them as such. The Jews in Malachi's time, having lately returned from exile and being very poor, thought they could not afford to give so much to the Church. So, for the sake of economy, they withheld

the tithes of their increase. You know the result. After years of bitter experience, they learned—what all who make the trial will learn, at last—that it does not pay to rob God.

The text before us is commonly understood and used in a spiritual sense. It may thus be used rightfully. But it ought to be taken literally. It means just what it says. If all Christians would give one-tenth of their incomes to the Church, they would have greater spiritual and temporal prosperity, the Lord's treasury would be running-over full, infidelity would be put to shame, the gospel would advance with rapid strides, and the world would soon be converted to Christ.

Every Christian believes that he ought to give some portion of his income to God, for the support of his Church. To each one of us, when we joined the Methodist Episcopal Church, this question was put, in the hearing of God and the congregation: "Will you contribute of your earthly substance, according to your ability, to the support of the gospel and the various benevolent enterprises of the Church?" We solemnly answered, "I will." That vow is registered in heaven; and we must keep it, or lose our souls. It is as impossible for a man to gain heaven without giving a portion of his money into the treasury of the Church, as to be saved without prayer or keeping the Ten Commandments. In saying this I merely affirm what you all believe and admit.

But what shall be the law of our giving? Our text contains the law: "Bring ye all the *tithes* into the storehouse." I maintain that the law of tithing is still binding on the people of God. But you say: "The law of tithing was a Jewish enactment, and is done away

in Christ." You are mistaken. The law of tithing is older, by many centuries, than Judaism. When Abraham was returning from the slaughter of the kings, laden with the spoils of victory, he was met by Melchisedec, king and priest of Salem, who brought bread and wine for him and his men, and blessed him in the name of God. Then Abraham gave Melchisedec one-tenth of all the plunder he had taken from the kings. Who this Melchisedec was, we do not know. It is probable, however, that he was Shem the son of Noah, the progenitor, and therefore the high priest of that one of the three divisions of the human family. It was certain that Shem was alive at that time, and, according to the constitution of the Patriarchal system, must have been the head and priest of all his descendants. Abraham paid tithes to God through his representative, Melchisedec, thus acknowledging the law of the tenth to be of Divine appointment.

Coming down the stream of time one hundred and seventy years, we overtake Abraham's grandson, Jacob, fleeing from his brother Esau to Padan-aram Near the little city of Luz he falls asleep on the ground, with a stone for his pillow, and dreams of a ladder with angels ascending and descending. Waking in the morning, he exclaims: "Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not. This is the house of God and the gate of heaven." Having named the place Bethel, which means the House of God, he vowed that he would be a servant of God henceforth, and added: "Of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee." Jacob evidently thought that he could not be a real servant of God, or, as we would say, a Christian, without giving one-tenth of his income to the service of Jehovah. Just how he expended his

tenth for God's service, we do not know. But that he did tithe his income as long as he lived, we are sure.

When God founded the Jewish Church and nation he re-enacted the ancient law of tithing, and made it binding on all the children of Israel, saying, as recorded in Leviticus xxvii, 30: "All the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's; it is holy unto the Lord." You will observe that God did not say the tithe *shall* be the Lord's, but *is* the Lord's. If the law of the tenth had then been enacted for the first time, the language would have been *shall* be, instead of *is*.

Jesus Christ, who came to fulfill the law, did not repeal the law of the tenth, but admitted its binding force when he said to the Pharisees: "Ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God; these ought ye to have done, *and not to leave the other undone*." When the Great Teacher said "and not to leave the other undone," he said, in effect, "Ye ought to pay tithes of all ye possess." Everything that was merely Jewish, Christ abolished when he introduced the New Dispensation. But tithing was not merely Jewish; therefore tithing has not been abolished, but is one of the laws of the Christian Church. "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse," is God's command to every one of us.

But even if we were to admit that tithing is not binding upon us as a law, no one can deny that it would be safe and wise for us to impose it upon ourselves as a voluntary rule of Christian beneficence. Whether it be a law or not, it is the only rule which God ever gave on this subject. What man, or set of men, could devise a better? Because the God of all grace, who commanded the Patriarchal and Jewish

Churches to pay the tenth, leaves us free to make our own rule of proportionate giving, shall we take advantage of him by giving less than Abraham, Jacob, and the Pharisees? Our blessings and privileges are so much greater than those of the Jews, and there is so much more need of money in carrying on the work of evangelizing the world than in merely supporting the temple service at Jerusalem, that we ought to give more, rather than less, than those who lived before the birth of Christ. Either as a law, equally binding with the Ten Commandments, or as a rule of Christian expediency, we ought to accept the giving of the tenth as our rule of practice.

Begin at once. Count what money you have on hand, and put aside one-tenth of it. Add to this store one-tenth of all you receive from day to day, and draw from it as demands are made upon you for aid in behalf of benevolence and Christian work. Have a drawer, or box, or purse, which shall be called "the Lord's." Into it put one-tenth of your net income from all sources, as it is received. Regard that tenth as belonging to God in such an absolute sense that to use it for yourself would be robbery as truly as though you should take it from the pocket of your neighbor.

Do you ask, "What is my net income?" If you are a farmer, your net income is all the money you receive for the products of your farm, the cash value of all your family consumes, and also the fair cash value of all you obtain by barter or exchange. From this total amount, before taking out the Lord's tenth, you may deduct all money paid for hired help and taxes, and also for interest on mortgages and other incumbrances. You may also deduct the cost of re-

pairs on buildings and the cost of tools needed in working your farm. If your land and stock increase in value, take no account of such increase at the time, but when you sell them tithe the increase above the amount originally paid. If you are a professional man, or a day laborer, put into the Lord's box, whenever you receive any money for your services, one-tenth of the amount. It is difficult to give rules for every possible case; but if you honestly intend to observe the law of the tenth, you will have no serious trouble in determining what to do.

"If I am in debt," some one says, "shall I not pay my debts before tithing my income?" By no means. Your tithe is the most sacred debt you could possibly owe. Remember, that one-tenth of your income belongs to God, and you must not use it to pay your debts to man. Under such a rule as that, all a man would have to do, to escape paying the tenth to God, would be to get in debt to man, and keep in debt. Many other questions might be asked. "Should I ever give more than one-tenth?" Yes, when you can afford to do so. *Giving* begins when the tenth has been *paid.* What you give over and above the tenth will be a "free-will-offering." The poor man should *pay* the tenth. The rich man should *give* beyond the tenth. "What if it takes all I get to support my family; shall I pay the tenth to God?" Yes, for two reasons: first, because the tenth belongs to God; and, second, because—strange as it may seem—the remaining nine-tenths will go further than the ten-tenths. If you do not believe that last statement, look at the text, and read again the history of the Jews in the days of Malachi. While they withheld the tenth, because they were poor and seemed to need all they had to live on, they

almost starved. But God told them that, if they would pay him the tenth, they would have left more than they could use. Malachi's God is our God.

It would do us all good, at this point, to listen to some of God's words about giving. "Blessed is he that considereth the poor; the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. The Lord will preserve him and keep him alive; and he shall be blessed upon the earth; and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies. The Lord will strengthen him on the bed of languishing; thou wilt make his bed in his sickness." "Trust in the Lord and do good, so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." "Honor the Lord with thy substance and with the first fruits of all thine increase, so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine." "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth; there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall be watered also himself." "And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul, then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday; and the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones; and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters fail not." "Give and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again." "I have showed you all things, how that so laboring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus how he said, It is more

blessed to give than to receive." "Every man as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver." When King James's translators came to this verse, they did not dare to give to the original of the word *cheerful* its exact meaning. It really means *hilarious*. A hilarious man is one who throws his cap into the air, and swings his arms and jumps up and down with delight. That is the way you ought to feel whenever you see the contribution-box coming toward you. Not that you should actually do that, for you would disturb the meeting; but you ought to feel like doing it whenever you have an opportunity, and the ability, to contribute to any good cause. Remember, "the Lord loveth a hilarious giver." "And God is able to make all grace [the word 'grace' here refers to temporal blessings] abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work."

Let us look at some of the results of giving, or paying, the tenth. The first which strikes our minds is the wonderful increase in the funds which the Church would have to use in carrying on the work of saving the world. Government officials estimate the average daily income of each man, woman, and child in the United States at fifty-five cents. Every one who stops to think, will agree that Methodists would average more than that; but we will be on the safe side, and accept the Government estimate. Now there are 2,766,656 communicants in the Methodist Episcopal Church. Five and one-half cents from each, per day, is one-tenth of the daily income. Multiplying this by the number of days in the year, we have over $20 as one-tenth of the annual income of each. Multi-

plying this by 2,766,656, we have $55,333,120 as one-tenth of the annual income of the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church. How much *do* they give? They give, all told, for the support of pastors and Conference claimants, home and foreign missionaries, for building, improving, and insuring churches and parsonages, for current expenses, and for all the benevolences about $23,000,000 annually. That is, if all our members would observe the ancient Divine law of tithing, our Church would contribute to the cause of the world's salvation nearly two and a half times as much as she now does. She would give for missions four million dollars a year; for building new churches half a million dollars; and for educating the blacks and poor whites of the South another half million.

Let us see how it would be in Corning District. We have 9,064 members and probationers. If every one of these would give a tenth, we should raise annually $181,280. What do we raise for all purposes? About $70,000. That is, if every Methodist on Corning District would observe the law of tithing, the district would raise nearly three times as much as it does.

Let us apply this reckoning to a single pastoral charge. Take one of the weakest in the whole district. I will not call it by name. I do not mention it to find fault. It does as much, in proportion to its ability, as any other charge. With great difficulty, it pays a salary of $300 to its pastor, and raises about $50 for all the benevolences. It has a membership of sixty. If their average income be taken to be the same as that of the entire nation (and I am sure it is not less) that charge, which now feels compelled to pinch its pastor down to a salary of $300, could pay him $800, and

have four hundred left for running expenses and denominational benevolences, if only they would adopt, and carry out, the Bible law of the tenth for God.

How mightily the work of God would advance in these regions if every Methodist would follow the example of Abraham, Jacob, and the primtive Christians; if every Methodist would believe, and obey, our text! No more poorly-paid ministers! No more abandoned churches! No more spiritually destitute neighborhoods! No more Boards of Stewards distracted over Church finances! No more heart-rending appeals to public congregations for funds to carry on God's work! No more oyster suppers, Church fairs, and broom-drills to raise money for God! Every pastor would have an ample salary; every Church treasury would be filled to overflowing; the Bride of Christ would stand unabashed before the world; and the gospel would spread through all these States and counties like fire in the dry grass of a Western prairie. Money alone will not save the world; but the world can not be saved without money. When all Christians learn to consecrate a tenth of their substance to God, the eastern skies will be growing red with the dawning of the Millennial Day.

Another result of tithing would be the death of covetousness. Covetousness is the giant sin of the age; it is the chief sin of the Church. There is nothing else which so gnaws into and consumes its spirituality. There is hardly any other sin at which the Word of God thunders so loudly. It puts covetousness in the same dark catalogue with uncleanness, fornication, and idolatry, and says: "Let no man deceive you with vain words; for because of these things cometh the wrath of God on the children of disobedi-

ence." I believe that covetousness will drag down more souls to hell from the Churches than any other one sin. Covetousness is not so rare a sin as many may think. Covetous men may be found in all our congregations. Are we lacking in charity if we say that a farmer, living in a three-thousand-dollar house, on a hundred-acre farm, with no debts and money in the bank, but giving only five dollars a year for the pastor's salary and fifty cents for missions, is guilty of the sin of covetousness? A pastor, not a thousand miles from here, preached a missionary sermon, one Sunday morning, to a large congregation of well-dressed people, in a rich farming community, and then took a collection for the cause of the world's salvation amounting to seventy-five cents. Were there any covetous persons in that Church? If we could make all our people believe that one-tenth of their income belongs wholly to God, and must be spent wholly in carrying on his work, a death-blow would be given to the monster Covetousness.

We are considering the results of paying the tenth to God. The chief result is stated in the text. "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse." That means set apart one-tenth of your net income for God. "That there may be meat in mine house." That means that God's Church may be supported, and the gospel be preached to all mankind. "And prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts." That means put God to the test by tithing your income for his cause, and see if he will not keep his promise, and bless you with all needed temporal and spiritual gifts. "If I will not open the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to re-

ceive it." That means that great temporal prosperity, and, by inference, great spiritual blessings, will surely follow the tithing of our income for God. The text is so plain that it is difficult to say anything which can make it plainer. It means exactly what it says. If, out of a heart of love, we pay the tenth, we shall prosper financially and spiritually. The text means that if you consecrate one-tenth of your income to God's cause, and touch not a cent of it for yourself, but live upon what remains, the nine-tenths will go farther than the ten-tenths.

If your income is five hundred dollars a year, and you spend fifty dollars for the support of the gospel in your own community, and for the conversion of the heathen, and for the evangelization of the benighted parts of the home-land, the four hundred and fifty dollars, which you will have left, will go farther, in the purchase of food and clothing, than the five hundred dollars would have, if you had kept the whole. Do you doubt that? Then you do not believe God speaking in the text. You think you can not afford to give God one-tenth of your income. Some men seem to think they can not afford to give one-seventh of their time; and so they work seven days in the week, in spite of the Fourth Commandment. In the long run, any man can do more mental or physical labor in six days than in seven. Thousands and tens of thousands have proved, by a long experience, that nine dollars are worth more to them than ten dollars. If you ask, "How can that be?" I answer, We can not tell; but we know that when we try to rob God, he has ten thousand ways in which he can outwit us, and add to our expenses, and subtract from our income and our

power to make and save. It is enough for us to know that God commands us to give him the tenth of our money and the seventh of our time, and promises that he will so bless us that the nine and the six will exceed in value the ten and the seven.

Much like the text are the words of Jesus: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Can any one tell how, by putting religion first and business afterward, business will be made to prosper better than by reversing the order? But so it is. Can any one explain the how of the Divine words: "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth?" But so it is. Can any one tell exactly why "it is more blessed to give than to receive?" But so it is. If you would succeed in worldly business, give your tenth to God. If the text does not mean that, it has no meaning at all.

I firmly believe that the widespread financial depression of these times is a punishment on our people, because, while their wealth has so marvelously increased, their gifts to God's cause have not increased in due proportion; because they have not brought all the tithes into God's storehouse. If the times are hard with you, "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse," and see if God "will not open the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing there shall not be room enough to receive it." Many of you complain bitterly of poverty. You deserve to be poor, and are poor, because you do not bring all the tithes into the storehouse. You sing and pray and try to consecrate yourself to God; but you do not bring your tithes—the tenth of your income—into the storehouse. You spiritualize the text until it means nothing; and

no blessing comes. Take it just as it reads; do just as it says; accept God's challenge; put him to the test; and see if he will not open the windows of heaven and pour you out a financial blessing greater than you ever received.

While, doubtless, the text is to be taken literally, as referring to temporal blessings, it also has a spiritual application. As, on the day of Pentecost, God opened the windows of heaven and poured out the Holy Spirit upon the Church at Jerusalem, so he is waiting to bless every one of us. Again and again we have sought the blessing, and have not received it. Why? One reason, I believe, is that we have withheld the tithes of our money. We have consecrated almost everything else; but have kept back the tenth of our income. We have given something to pay the pastor, and to meet the apportionments for Church benevolences; we think we have given liberally. But we have given spasmodically, without system, sparingly. We have given as we happened to feel at the time. We have given what we happened to have when the appeal was made. God commands us to give from principle, with system, freely. He commands us to give, or pay, him the tenth. Because we have disobeyed this law, we have not received the baptism of the Holy Ghost. If the Church on Corning District would walk up to God's altar, and lay upon it her pocket-book, there would come such an outpouring of the Holy Spirit on all our congregations as we have hardly dared to dream of; and thousands on thousands would be soundly converted to God within the next six months.

The way to get a pentecostal blessing is as simple

as "two times two make four." "Bring ye all the tithes"—the tithes of money, the tenth of your income—"into the storehouse, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

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